

History of St. George's Road
Congregational Church
(Bolton)

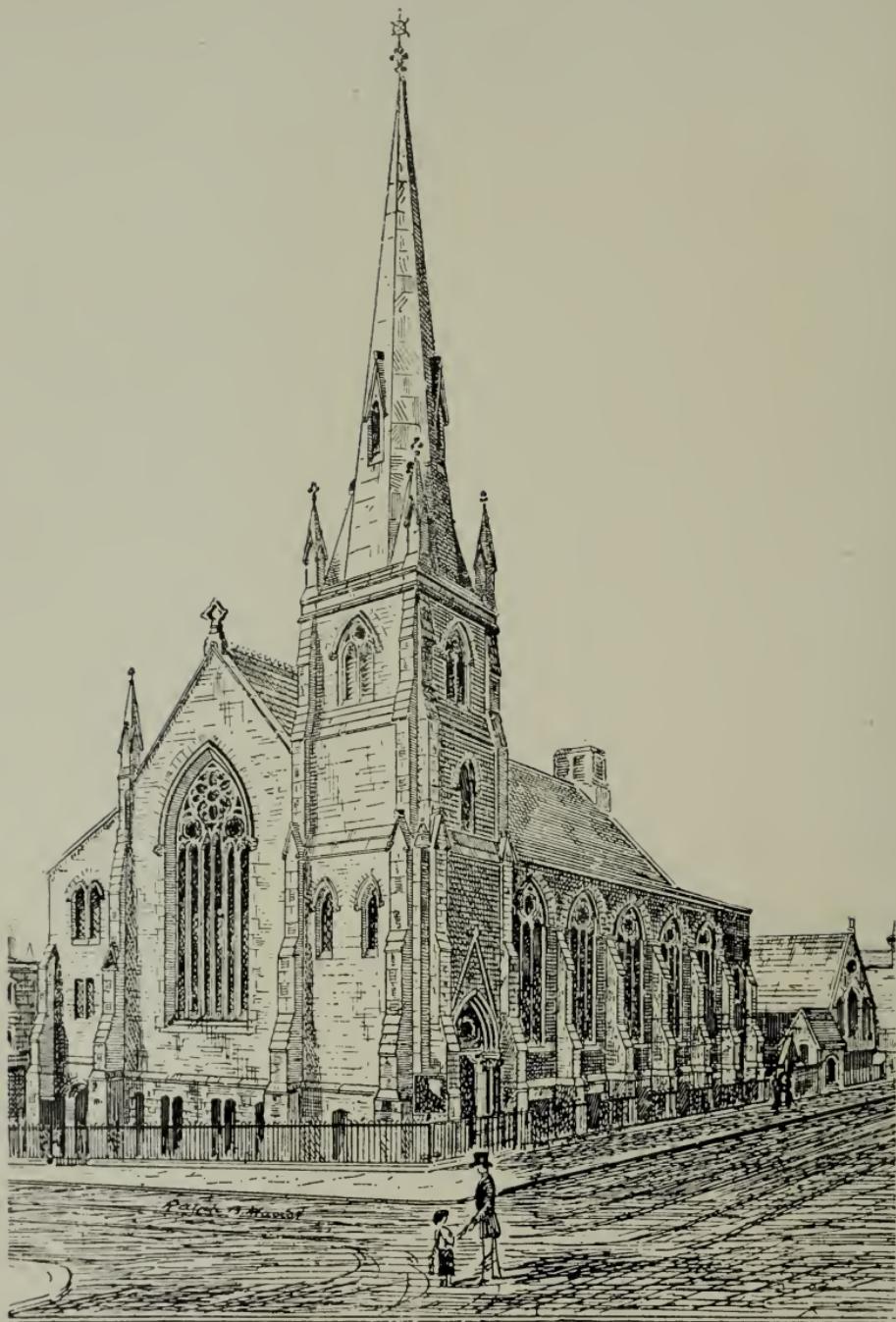
AND ITS CONNECTIONS.

F. W. PEAPLES

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ST. GEORGE'S ROAD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

HISTORY
OF THE
St. George's Road Congregational
Church
AND ITS CONNECTIONS.

A Record of Work accomplished
from 1752 to 1912.

BY
F. W. PEAPLES.

WITH PORTRAITS AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

*Issued in connection with the Jubilee of St. George's Road
Church in 1913.*

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“ Great the changes time has wrought,
Great the blessings truth has brought,
Great the lessons learned and taught,
By Fifty Years.”

*To the Members and Congregation of St. George's
Road Congregational Church I dedicate this book in
remembrance of the many kindnesses shown to me at
various times, in the ordinary way of work and service.*

“ Look back, how much there has been done,
Look round, how much there is to win,
The fears of the night are gone,
The glories of the day begin.”

CONTENTS.

PART I.

ST. GEORGE'S ROAD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

CONTENTS.

PART II.

OTHER INTERESTS STARTED.

Chapter		Page
XXXIII.	Albert Place United Methodist Church	191
XXXIV.	New Interests	195
XXXV.	Taking Legal Hold of Premises	198
XXXVI.	Albert Place Church Jubilee Celebrations	203
XXXVII.	Bank Top Congregational Church	206
XXXVIII.	Formation of Bank Top Church	211
XXXIX.	Duke's Alley New Chapel	215
XL.	Starting Afresh	218
XLI.	Closing Scenes	222
XLII.	Corner-Stone Laying at Tyldesley	228
XLIII.	Tyldesley Congregational Church	233
XLIV.	Derby Street Congregational Church	239
XLV.	Further Developments	244
XLVI.	Pastorate of the Rev. H. H. Scullard	248
XLVII.	Deane Mission Extension	252
XLVIII.	New Church Built	256
XLIX.	Continuing the Work	260
L.	Origin of Blackburn Road Congregational Church	265
LI.	The First Recognised Minister	270
LII.	Iron Church Erected and Opened	275
LIII.	Growth and Extension	278
LIV.	A Cathedral of Nonconformity	284
LV.	Merit Recognised	290
LVI.	New School Erected	293
LVII.	Changing Pastors	297
LVIII.	Frederick Cooper Memorial Institute	302
LIX.	Kay Street Mission—Starting Work here	308
LX.	Consolidating the Work	312
LXI.	Missioner Appointed	318
	Appendix—Old Seatholders at Duke's Alley Chapel	323

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

	<i>Frontispiece</i>
	FACING PAGE
St. George's Road Congregational Church	35
The late Rev. Robert Simpson, D.D.	56
Interior—St. George's Road Congregational Church	71
The late Rev. C. A. Berry, D.D.	86
The late Rev. J. R. Wolstenholme, M.A.	94
The late Mr. James Bromiley	102
The late Deacon H. Webster	102
The late Deacon Joseph Taylor	102
The late Mr. J. B. Parkinson	102
The late Mr. James Lever	110
Rev. George Barber	114
Mr. H. S. Sturges	127
Mr. D. Ottewill	127
Rev. Howard Mudie, B.D.	136
The late Mr. W. Milligan	147
The late Mr. James Smethurst, J.P.	147
Miss E. Mason	154
Miss A. J. Atherton	154
Miss Alice Atherton	154
Mrs. T. Picken	154
Minister and Deacons, St. George's Road Congregational Church, 1913	157
The late Mr. W. F. Tillotson, J.P.	165
The late Mr. B. Cole	169
The late Mr. F. Cooper	169
Alderman J. Tyas Cooper, J.P.	174
Superintendents, Officers, and Teachers of Senior Classes	176
Superintendents and Teachers of Primary Department and Junior Classes	176
Bank Top Congregational Church	207
Duke's Alley Chapel	222
Temperance and Memorial Hall, Tyldesley	234
Interior—Tyldesley Congregational Church	234
Derby Street Congregational Church	255
The Old Iron Church	275
Blackburn Road Congregational Church	286
Blackburn Road Congregational Sunday School	294
Frederick Cooper Memorial Institute	302
Mr. Colin Cooper	307
Rev. W. J. Collier, M.A.	307
Mr. Thos. Calder, Missioner	318
Interior—Kay Street Mission	318

P R E F A C E .

The spiritual power of the Church in its various ministries has been a growing power, and exercised to the full extent of its capacity. Of all the work done under the sun, there is none more difficult to estimate the results of, at short intervals of time, than religious work. Even then the amount of work done cannot be measured correctly.

This book is in reality to mark out the Jubilee of the Erection of the St. George's Road Congregational Church, but the Church as a Church had a prior existence at Duke's Alley Chapel of one hundred and eleven years before the removal to St. George's Road Church took place, and is therefore 161 years of age at the time of its Jubilee in 1913. A simple matter of arithmetic proves this, and when this removal took place in 1863, instead of keeping to the old name of Duke's Alley, the members of the old Church decided to adopt the new one of St. George's Road Church. This explains how it comes about that while St. George's Road Church has really only been in existence for 50 years since its foundation, it is yet able to claim the credit of having been in existence for 161 years. The record of work accomplished during this period is a remarkably interesting one, and the work and place taken in the religious life in the town will be found to be a foremost one, and redounds greatly to the credit of all who have taken part therein, or who have been connected with this place of worship in any way.

In order to establish the continuity of the history of Duke's Alley with St. George's Road, I have gone very carefully through all the minutes and evidence available. The motions which led to the removal and the reasons for so doing, are set carefully out in their natural order or sequence. A perusal of these will establish the right of this Church to the claim that it was the first Church in this town in which Congregational Principles were recognised and preached, and will show beyond doubt that the Church which afterwards occupied

the Duke's Alley premises was an entirely separate and New Church. The point is so important a one that I deemed it worthy of special notice, and special work to verify it, as will be seen in the narrative.

" In the early days the Nonconformist congregations of this town comprised the very cream of society, viewed from a social point of view. The late Mr. Benjamin Hick attended Duke's Alley Chapel, and designed the alterations when the entrance was brought into Ridgway Gates. There was little doubt that a great blow was given about the time of the Reform Bill, when political feeling ran very high. Up to that time the Independents were separated from the Established Church more on doctrinal grounds than on the principle of an Establishment ; indeed, at that time they generally went by the name of Calvinists, and they reproached the Church with having a Roman Liturgy, an Armenian clergy, and a Calvanistic creed. People hear little of Armenianism now, but at that time these doctrines were very familiar to a large proportion of those who attended Independent Chapels ; and since then, not only Independents here, but throughout the country, have been very much weakened by the introduction of the minutes of Council on Education, when grants began to be made to those schools where religious education was taught. The Independents, however, had by this time become opposed to the Establishment as such, even more than on doctrinal points, and contended that the State had no right to interfere with either education or religion ; and at that period this view was very popular.

" It soon became apparent that the enormous sums given to the Church and other bodies who had no objection to receiving education grants (but particularly the Church), drew towards them a very large portion of the population, and consequently brought about a decline of the influence of the Independents, and this antagonism made the breach already existing still wider. Some Independents had under-estimated the deep attachment of Church people to the parochial system ; the latter had a feeling that by being Churchmen it gave them a sort of stake in the country, and thus caused them to assume an air of superiority over Nonconformists."

It is interesting to trace what Bolton was like early in the

16th Century. The town itself contained a population of 500 ; the parish extended for several miles around, and its inhabitants were about 2,500. Civil wars between Charles I. and the Parliament occupied attention at this time, to the exclusion of all else. Bolton people, to their honour, were on the side of the Parliament, and they fortified and garrisoned the town against the despotic monarch, while the Wigan Royalists had “ shotten their greyte cannon against Bolton 14 times and been repulsed.” The Parish Church for years was their store house for ammunition, a place where they could both pray to God and keep their powder dry. In 1644, Prince Rupert and Lord Derby besieged the town, defeated the Parliamentary troops, sacked the town, and slaying 1,000 fighting soldiers and civilians, left the banks of our river Croal strewed with their unburied remains.

No mills were in existence at that time ; no Sunday Schools, and not another place of worship existed, the Parish Church reigning supreme monarch of all it surveyed.

No newspapers were printed ; no steam engines used, and scarcely a decent road existed, in fact, Bolton then was something like what Belmont is now, but not as advanced. A few looms were worked by hand in private houses, and fustians, dimities, and rough quilts were woven. Master and men lived together, and before six o'clock breakfasted together on porridge, out of one dish, with the fingers, and scraped it so clean that it hardly needed washing from year's end to year's end. The only place of worship—the Parish Church—was well attended. It had to be, for the people had no other place to go to except the stocks, if they did not attend Church.

The following warrant illustrates this point :—

“ County of Lancaster, to wit. Whereas, complaint on oath has this day been made to me, Robert Booth, Esq., one of His Majesty's Justices, that James Schofield, of Little Lever, labourer, did on Sunday, June 27th, at the time of divine service, *loyter and wander about, and absent himself* from divine service, and, being *blamed and threatened*, did wilfully and wickedly on the same day, and the day following, swear and utter one or more oaths, and abused William Hardman, Churchwarden of the Parish Church at Bolton. These are to empower you to levy on the goods and chattels of the said

James Schofield, by sale thereof, the sum of two shillings, and for want of sufficient distress of the said two shillings, you must *set him in the stocks*, there to remain for four hours. Given under my hand, July 5, 1736. Also one shilling for Sabbath breaking."

This state of things prevailed here less than 200 years ago—a shilling an oath fine and another shilling for neglecting Church. A shilling then representing considerably more than it does to day. This was forcibly compelling them to come in.

"Calamy's Memorials" state that: "Bolton has been an ancient and famous seat of religion." At the very first dawn of the Reformation a number of persons here received the Gospel in its purity and simplicity, and this was proved in the lives of those martyrs for the faith, Mr. Bradford and Mr. George Marsh. May this spirit remain and grow stronger with time.

The annals of this Church are full of extension projects, and it has ever been in the forefront of the religious life and work of the town and neighbourhood. The unity of the Church has been proverbial, and its growth great. Its children recall the wonderful works of their fathers in the days of old, and they themselves are inspired thereby to carry its traditions and worship abroad.

F. W. PEAPLES.

BOLTON, JUNE, 1913.

Part I.

EARLY NONCONFORMITY IN BOLTON.

CHAPTER I.

Founder of First Congregational Church in Bolton—The Rev. John Bennet—Conversion—Enters Ministry—Zealous Worker—Mobbing the Preachers—Bolton Cross Preaching—Religious Society Formed—Wesley's Visits to Bolton.

The growth of Congregationalism in this town seems to have been synonymous with the growth and spread of Wesleyanism, for, in looking into the early history of the movements we find that they are so intimately bound up together, that it is difficult at the first glance to dissociate them.

To the Rev. John Bennet is given the credit of founding the first Congregational Church in Bolton, and this may be said to have sprung out of the great revival which was carried on by Whitefield and Wesley. In 1750 or 1751, George Whitefield came to Bolton and preached a sermon which was described as one of the most wonderful he ever delivered. At the close of the sermon he prayed with great fervour that on the very spot on which he stood a temple might be raised to the honour of the Lord. That prayer was literally answered, for the ground on which Whitefield stood when he offered the prayer was leased by John Bennet on September 8th, 1753, and on it was erected Duke's Alley Chapel, which was opened in 1754.

John Bennet should therefore be always remembered by Bolton Congregationalists for his great work here. From his early history he seems to have been a disciple of Wesley, for a time at any rate, even though he originated and formed religious societies in Bolton and other places, which were known as *Mr. Bennet's Societies*. In conjunction with Mr. Wesley, he preached at various times and at various places.

Undoubtedly an interesting personality, his influence for good in Lancashire and Yorkshire, Cheshire, and Derbyshire, was very great and wide spreading indeed.

To go a little further into his history, we find that he came from Chinley, near Chapel-en-le-Frith, Derbyshire, and his remains repose in that locality.

For some little time a preacher in connection with the Rev. John Wesley, one of the founders of Methodism, he became a zealous preacher of the gospel, and thus by him the Methodists were also introduced into this part of the country.

His early history may soon be summed up.

Born of good family, he was intended for one of the learned professions, and to that end received a good classical education. His wish was to enter the Christian Ministry, and with that intention, at the age of 17, he became a student under Dr. Latham, of Findern, near Derby. There, however, he did not remain long, and relinquishing all thoughts of the ministry, he engaged himself as a justice's clerk to R. Bagshaw, Esq., with whom he remained until 22 years of age. He afterwards embarked in business for two or three years, during which time his thoughts turned towards religion, and he eventually devoted himself to it with zeal and earnestness.

In 1739, when 25 years of age, he was invited to go and hear David Taylor preach at Sheffield. For the purpose of gratifying curiosity, and having the opportunity of ridiculing a Methodist, he went ; and having gone to mock, remained to pray. At once he invited the preacher to visit his district, and travelled with him from place to place and assisted in his services, even though he thereby incurred the deep displeasure of his relatives.

Soon afterwards he made the acquaintance of Mr. Benjamin Ingham, of Abbeford, Yorkshire, and induced him also to visit Derbyshire and the surrounding neighbourhoods.

On the second of June, 1742, when Mr. Bennet had become a preacher himself, he was introduced to the Rev. John Wesley, at Murfield, by Mr. John Nelson, having heard Mr. Wesley preach for the first time at Dewsbury, near Wakefield, the day before. Another meeting with Mr. Wesley at or near Chesterfield, on April 15th, 1743, resulted in an invitation from that gentleman for Mr. Bennet to proceed with him to London, Bristol, and other places, and from that time commenced his close connection with Mr. Wesley as a preacher.

He travelled in this capacity, in different parts of the

country ; still, for all that, he devoted himself chiefly to the superintendence of the various religious societies which he himself established in his own special districts. His circuit embraced part of Yorkshire, Lancashire, Cheshire, and Derbyshire.

On June 14th, 1744, Mr. Bennet prevailed upon Mr. Wesley to accompany him into this circuit, and from Mr. John Wesley's own Journal, it is quite evident that this was the first occasion on which he had preached there. Staying in all two days, his headquarters were at Chinley, the residence of Mr. Bennet.

Again we find him paying visits in 1745 and in 1748, staying each time as before, two days.

Respecting the visit in May, 1745, Wesley, in his Journal says : " Friday and Saturday (May 26th and 27th), at John Bennet's request, I preached at several places in Lancashire and Cheshire."

Mr. Bennet is mentioned several times in Wesley's Journal.

As an instance of the difficulties attending on the preaching of the Gospel in those days, the following account of an attempt that was made to mob Mr. Bennet, at Holme, 5 miles from Manchester, is interesting.

" As I was expounding in John Heywood's house, a band of wicked, drunken men, with clubs and staves, having a petty steward of a neighbouring gentleman's at their head as captain or leader, and gathered together by the blowing of a horn, came and assaulted the house, breaking the windows, and pulling the thatch off some part of the roof. I was obliged to leave off expounding, and we fell on our knees and prayed. The shouts and acclamations for some time abated, and I spoke to the people again. No sooner had I begun but the bells at Eccles and Flixton began to ring, and then they broke into the house. I was directed to go away to a friend's house, which I did, and so escaped their malice. I found such solid peace as I had never done before in trouble. It is not in the power of men or devils to interrupt a man's peace a moment, who looks with a single eye to God."

This account was sent to Mr. John Wesley, and in the same letter he earnestly entreats him to visit the towns in this immediate vicinity, saying : " I think your way is plain and

open, and I desire, if you can, you will allow yourself some time to visit them as you return from the north. If you intend to do so, please let me know in time, that I may give notice, for the people will come from every quarter."

This invitation Mr. Wesley accepted ; and he paid his first visit to Bolton on his way to Mr. Bennet, on August 28th, 1748. The account of this visit as given by Mr. Wesley in his Journal, also shows how strife and disorder at religious meetings were rife in those days. We extract this account :—

" At one I went to the Cross in Bolton. There was a vast number of people, but many of them utterly wild. As soon as I began speaking, they began thrusting to and fro, endeavouring to throw me down from the steps on which I stood. They did so once or twice ; but I went up again, and continued my discourse. They began to throw stones ; at the same time some got upon the Cross behind me to push me down ; on which I could not but observe how God overrules even the minutest circumstances. One man was bawling just at my ear, when a stone struck him on the cheek, and he was still. A second was forcing his way down to me, till another stone hit him on the forehead ; it bounded back, the blood ran down, and he came no farther. The third, having got close to me, stretched out his hand, and in the instant a sharp stone came upon the joints of his fingers. He shook his hand, and was very quiet till I concluded my discourse."

Here we have a good instance of the way in which the Cross, which then stood a little further back than the present Cross does, and nearer the left side if the pedestrian was proceeding in the direction of the Parish Church, was regarded as being in the centre of the town, and as such was the main centre from which communications to the people, particularly of a religious character, were to be made. Its form was admirably suitable for this purpose. We now go to the Town Hall steps to listen to discourses which are edifying or otherwise, just in accordance with the capacity of the individual for sifting the matter then deduced. The rough experience of Mr. Wesley was again repeated when he came to Bolton on Wednesday, October 18th, 1749, in response to a request from Mr. Bennet. This account is very illustrative of the prevailing lawlessness and the persecution which it was fashionable to

indulge in when Methodism was being preached. We had not then as a people quite got rid of the dominance exercised by representatives of the Established Church, or freed ourselves of many old-time notions, and therefore these religious disturbances can now be viewed with a wider outlook.

" We came to Bolton about five in the evening. We had no sooner entered the main street (Deansgate), than we perceived that the lions at Rochdale were lambs in comparison of those at Bolton. Such rage and bitterness I scarce ever saw before, in any creatures that bore the form of men. They followed us in full cry to the house where we went ; and as soon as we were gone in, took possession of all the avenues to it, and filled the street from one end to the other. After some time the waves did not roar so loud. Mr. P—— thought he might venture out. They immediately closed in, threw him down, and rolled him in the mire ; so that when he scrambled from them, and got into the house again, one could scarce tell what or who he was. When the first stone came among us through the window, I expected a shower to follow ; and the rather, because they had now procured a bell to call their whole forces together. But they did not design to carry on the attack at a distance ; presently one ran up, and told us the mob had burst into the house ; he added that they had got John Bennet in the midst of them. They had ; and he laid hold on the opportunity to tell them of ' the terrors of the Lord.'

" Meantime D—— T—— engaged another part of them with smoother and softer words. Believing the time was now come, I walked down into the thickest of them. They had now filled all the rooms below. I called for a chair. The winds were hushed, and all was calm and still. My heart was filled with love, my eyes with tears, and my mouth with arguments. They were amazed, they were ashamed, they were melted down, they devoured every word. What a time was this ! O, how did God change the counsel of old Ahithophel into foolishness ; and bring all the drunkards, swearers, sabbath-breakers, and mere sinners in the place, to hear of his plenteous redemption !

" Thursday, 19th.—Abundantly more than the house could contain were present at five in the morning (earnest seekers

after truth these), to whom I was constrained to speak a good deal longer than I was accustomed to do. Perceiving they still wanted to hear, I promised to preach again at nine, in a meadow near the town. Thither they flocked from every side ; and I called aloud : ' All things are ready ; come unto the marriage.' O, how have a few hours changed the scene ! We could now walk through every street of the town, and none molested or opened his mouth, unless to thank or bless us."

In the meantime, Mr. Bennet continued his labours, visiting the societies he had already established, and carrying the gospel to places where it was not known. He generally preached two or three times a day, and travelled for that purpose nearly 100 miles every week.

Truly our founder was a strenuous worker.

In one of the first entries in his own Journal relative to Bolton, early in the year 1747, he says : " 29 persons entered their names ; Lord increase the number, and hasten Thy kingdom. May the leaven, leaven the lump."

Thus early he was successful in forming a strong religious society in this town. He prepared the way for the Wesleys, and was one of the first instruments, whom God raised up to awaken the spiritual susceptibilities of the masses of the working population, who were at that time devoted to sensual pleasures, and addicted to every kind of immorality. His pulpit services were highly esteemed, and he received many pressing invitations to preach before the notabilities of his time, many of which he accepted and filled with credit to his calling.

In 1749, on the 3rd of October, he was married to Mrs. Grace Murray, at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, in St. Andrew's Church, in the presence of the Rev. John Whitefield and the Rev. Charles Wesley. This lady was a native of Newcastle, and possessed sound religious feelings, great energy, a sound judgment, and considerable information. She had first heard Mr. Wesley during a residence in London, the home of her first husband, and through his preaching, her religious nature was awakened. She was afterwards led to embrace those views of the gospel which are essential to all real religious life, under the ministry of Mr. Whitefield. As soon as they were united, they started on a preaching tour together, and she

always accompanied him, when practicable, on these excursions, relieving him from that part of his work which specially concerned the female portion of the various societies. Within eight days they were at Bolton together, staying here a few days regulating the whole society, and delivering tickets to the members. Mr. Wesley did not again visit Bolton until practically compelled to do so by the events of 1752, but Mr. Bennet continued as before, his visits, and preached the word with increasing success, being greatly aided in the other departments of his labour by the efforts of his wife. Vicar Whitehead, who, though not at all methodistically inclined in his views, still for all that, invited him to breakfast.

CHAPTER II. STORMY TIMES.

John Bradford—George Marsh—Rev. Ellis Saunderson—Robert Parke—William Gregg—Last Excommunication in Bolton—Richard Goodwin—Act of Uniformity—Conventicle Act—Five Mile Act—Declaration of Indulgence—First Nonconformist Place of Worship in Bolton—Mealhouse Lane Meeting Place—Toleration Act—Attempt to Unite Presbyterians and Independents—Its Failure.

So far we have been dealing solely with events that led up to the establishment of our own Church, yet it must not be supposed that the story of the struggle for religious freedom in bygone days, and which is one of the memorable things of the past, is a story in which the founders of our Church alone took part. They merely had their place to fill in the great struggle which then went on, and right nobly did they fill that part.

We realise that more to-day than ever before, and reap to the full the reward of their labours.

As early as the 16th Century, John Bradford visited Bolton, and pleaded with the men of Lancashire for their souls until the evil time came upon them, when the Roman Catholic Queen Mary came to the throne, and then his voice was effectively silenced. Among his converts in the neighbourhood was George Marsh, a farmer, of the Parish of Deane, whose name is still remembered as a tradition of honour in the town and neighbourhood.

It is pretty clear during the first 30 years of the 17th Century that the preaching in the Bolton Parish Church, when the Rev. Ellis Saunderson was the Vicar, was very strongly in a Protestant and even Puritan direction.

The opinions of the Rev. Ellis Saunderson and the Rev. James Gosnell, the assistant preacher, eventually brought them into trouble with the authorities at Chester. On October 3rd, 1604, they were summoned to appear before the Bishop there, and were publicly admonished by him for insubordination. In 1615, Saunderson was succeeded by Robert Parke, a native of the town, and a man of like mind as himself. At last Parke had to choose between his living and his conscience, and like a man he gave up his living rather than his conscience, and went to Holland, where he became joint minister in the English Church at Rotterdam. The Rev. James Gosnell embraced Nonconformist principles in 1623. He left land to found a Lectureship, and these lectures used to be given at the Market Cross in Churchgate.

The next Vicar of Bolton, William Gregg, installed in 1630, was a man after Archbishop Laud's own heart and ready to carry out his will.

If we had been in Bolton Parish Church on Sunday, September 9th, 1632, we should have heard the Vicar read out the names of 20 people—16 men and four women—and declare them excommunicated for various ecclesiastical offences. Excommunication was a serious thing in those days, for, to use a modern phrase, it meant boycotting. Other lists were read out in later years, and the last excommunication was on August 30th, 1640, when the name of James Leigh, of Little Bolton, was read out. Deliverance then came to the Puritans as the Long Parliament came into power, and Laud's career as a persecutor came to an end. On the death of William Gregg, Parke came back from Holland to be one of their ministers. The other preacher was Richard Goodwin, who, after preaching for 20 years as Vicar of the town, gathered together the congregation for which Bank Street Chapel was built, and which was legally formed in 1672.

Goodwin was a man of strong convictions, and cherished a faith which enabled him to stand firm and true to his God, and his conscience, on all occasions, and as a result, his name

stands among those grand old men whom we now recognise as the chief pioneers of Bolton Nonconformity.

At this critical time in the nation's history, when Bolton was proving itself so staunch in the cause of liberty, Goodwin's vigorous personality and staunch convictions received recognition from the leaders in the town. Faithfulness to his conscientious scruples secured for him the confidence of the "classis," and the military heads of the Commonwealth.

The troublesome times caused by the Civil Wars and the attack and the sacking of Bolton, caused Goodwin to flee for his life to Hull, and from thence to London, and from there to accept a parish in Northampton.

He returned again to Bolton in 1647, and was appointed "Minister-assistant at the Bolton Parish Church" (to the Rev. John Harpur, who then held the position at the Parish Church as minister), a position he efficiently discharged until the death of Vicar Harpur in 1657. He was then appointed as Vicar of the Parish Church in 1660, where he had in reality been the sole minister for three years previously, and retained that position for a period of five years, until in fact he was ejected from it in 1662, by the passing of the Act of Uniformity on May 19th, 1662, as was the lecturer of Deane, the Rev. John Tyldesley, in 1678.

Goodwin, the faithful servant of God, whose labours were so richly endowed here, is one of the two Vicars whose dust lies beneath the floor of the old Parish Church. The entry in the *Parish Church Record*, reads:—

"Mr. Richard Goodwin, of Harwood, formerly minister of Bolton, buried 25th of December, 1685, *intra ecclesia* (under the Church). His age at death was 72."

This Act required that "every person, Vicar, or other minister whatsoever, should before the feast of St. Bartholomew, 'openly and publicly before the congregation assembled for religious worship declare his unfeigned assent and consent to all and everything contained in, and prescribed by, the book entitled the Book of Common Prayer, and Administration of the Sacraments, and other rites and ceremonies according to the use of the Church of England'; that 'there is no obligation upon any person from the oath commonly called the

Solemn League and Covenant'; that 'the same itself is an unlawful oath.' It further enacted that 'no person should be capable of any benefice, or presume to consecrate or administer the Holy Sacrament before he be ordained a priest by episcopal ordination.'"

All ministers not complying with the requirements of the Act were deprived of their benefices, and if they officiated in any Church, even as lecturers or occasional preachers, were subject to heavy fines and imprisonment. Nothing could have been devised that was more offensive or humiliating to the Puritan ministers. They had publicly to profess their assent and consent to many things from which they had avowed their dissent, and so to contradict their public profession before their own people. The Nonconformists were made of sterner stuff than to submit to such ignominy, even though it was a hard and a terrible ordeal which they were called upon to face, yet out of the 2,000 men who came out in 1662 few were Independents. The majority were Presbyterians, and they were not the spiritual forefathers of the Congregationalists of to-day. They were State Churchmen through and through. They did not believe in a broad toleration, they would have regarded complete religious liberty as the devil's doctrine. But they learnt the lesson of persecution and began to discern the virtues of toleration when they themselves were not tolerated, and their descendants came to see that the Act of Uniformity was a necessary corollary of the State control of religion.

Nonconformists are sometimes told that they should not make party capital out of religious history of the 17th century. If that means they are not to look back on their history, and that they are to look at the relationship between the different churches to-day without any reference at all to historical events by which alone that relationship could be explained, it is an impossible demand. They could not and would not live as though the past had never been. The Act of Uniformity was a landmark in the religious history of the nation, and its effect has been to foster diversity. The points of difference between Nonconformity and Anglicanism to-day are greater than in 1662, but any attempt at enforcing uniformity would create diversity, as all such Acts always would. For instance, men of 1662 saw that no obstacle to uniformity was greater

than the demand that they should submit to ordination at the hands of a bishop, and that was the greatest obstacle to-day not only to uniformity, but to real unity of spirit.

About 70 Lancashire ministers had to leave their churches and homes and become fugitives in the land, because they would not be untrue to those sacred convictions to which they had been guided by the Spirit of Truth, or relinquish at the bidding of reckless and godless men their Christian freedom.

Richard Goodwin, M.A., of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, had on the passing of the Act been Vicar of Bolton about twenty years. An excellent scholar, diligent student, and able preacher, he was much beloved and trusted by his parishioners, and was driven out on August 24th, 1662—Black Bartholomew's Day—in English annals. Calamy says of Goodwin, that he was “a plain and practical preacher, with an excellent gift of prayer, who will have a great retinue of souls to present to his Master at the last day.” Despite the appreciation which was so freely accorded of his consistent life, his earnest ministrations, his “answers and pleas” before the Consistory Court of Chester in 1661, were of no account, and he had to relinquish his post.

For several months Goodwin continued his spiritual labours in the town, and succeeded in gathering congregations in private dwelling-houses, and winning friends who were in sympathy with his views, but a stop was soon put to this.

The Conventicle Act of 1664 prohibited, under penalty of imprisonment and transportation, all meetings of more than five persons beyond the household for any religious worship other than that of the prayer book, and made it a crime to refuse to attend the Parish Church. This condemned to banishment all who refused to attend the parish churches, and doomed to death those who returned from banishment. By the Five Mile Act of 1665, every rejected minister was required to swear that he would never endeavour any alteration of Government in Church or State. If he refused, he was forbidden to go within five miles of any corporate town or of any place where he used to minister, under penalty of a fine of £40 and imprisonment for six months.

Then came the Test and Corporation Acts, which prohibited any but those who took the Lord's Supper according to the

rites of the English Church, from taking either civil or military offices.

By such iniquitous enactments, Charles II.'s Parliament endeavoured to suppress the free exercise of religious worship. During this time of keen persecution, Mr. Goodwin retired to Manchester and studied chemistry.

In 1672, under the Declaration of Indulgence, preaching licences were granted to John Bradshaw, of Rivington, and to the houses of John Okey, Robert Hall, John Crompton, Robert Fletcher, John Mason, and Adam Fearonside. A licence was also granted to Richard Goodwin to preach in these houses. We mention these names with honour, as they were the founders of Nonconformity in the town. On December 9th, 1672, a licence was granted for "a newly-erected meeting-house at Bolton," which was described as "Congregational." That entry among the State papers is historically interesting as giving the date of the first Nonconformist place of worship which was recognised as such in the town, and from this place was gathered the congregation which went to the old Bank Street Chapel when it was first opened as a Calvinistic meeting-house, where principles accepted by Congregationalists were promulgated, and which was razed in 1854, for present building now used.

The Nonconformist brethren met in 1672, at a house in Deansgate, at the corner of Mealhouse Lane, part of the site of the Woolpack public-house. This was formerly the private abode of John Okey, brother-in-law of Oliver Heywood, a wealthy merchant of Puritan tendencies, under whose generous roof Goodwin collected a very large and influential Nonconformist congregation. Within this humble edifice Mr. Goodwin was the preacher twice every Lord's Day, from 1672, and the ensuing thirteen years, and from here it may fairly be said that Nonconformity had its birth in Bolton-le-Moors. In the room or old chapel over the house, which measured 26-ft. by 18-ft., goodly congregations assembled, including many former church members. From this meeting place in Deansgate, which afterwards came to be known as the "Nonconformists' Chapel," the principles spread and grew, until the public testimony borne by the numerous families in the town, who made costly sacrifices in those days for the sake of vindicating the principles of

the rights of conscience in the matters of faith and judgment, eventually established the principles firmly, and enabled them to grow to the strength and status which they now hold.

Oliver Heywood, Henry Newcome, and other Nonconformist preachers of the day, came to his quaint-looking Bethel ; and these were the men who made the force that emanated from the Mealhouse Lane tabernacle, that eventually spread right through the town and neighbourhood, and also far beyond its confines. There Oliver Heywood often ministered the Word of Life, and it is remarkable that on the last occasion of his preaching there he administered the Lord's Supper to about 500 communicants.

Mr. Goodwin was succeeded by the Rev. John Lever, a native of the town, who had been ejected from the extra Parochial Chapel at Cockey Moor, or Ainsworth. The successor of Mr. Lever was the Rev. Robert Seddon.

Gatherings and memorable associations here were engrained in the lives of its workers, and this small and unpretentious sanctuary, weathered the winds and storms of two centuries or more, remaining an historic religious landmark locally, until it was eventually demolished in 1873.

In 1675 the Indulgence was withdrawn, licences were cancelled, and the old work and harassing persecutions went on as before. At last the great Revolution of 1688 brought in a new King and a new era of religious freedom.

From 1685 until the Toleration Act was passed in 1689, there does not seem to have been any regular Nonconformist Ministry in Bolton.

On the passing of the Toleration Act in 1689, Nonconformists came out of their obscure rooms and lurking places, and to this year we assign the first regular chapel erected in Bolton—that in Bank Street.

An attempt was made at this time to unite the two great sections of Puritans—the Presbyterians and the Independents. They had wrestled side by side for religious liberty, and it was thought they could have used this boon, which had been so long fought for, in united worship. This led to the revival of the "Provincial Assembly," whose first general meeting was held in Bolton in 1693. The attempt failed. The doctrinal and ecclesiastical divergencies of the two great parties could

not be bridged over. The Bolton Presbyterians then inclined to Armenianism and Arianism, and having passed through those stages, landed at Unitarianism, which the Bank Street congregation continues to practice.

There was, however, still a section of that congregation who zealously maintained Calvinistic or Evangelical opinions, and their persistent discontent with the utterances from the pulpit caused perpetual difficulty and dissension, until finally, they seceded and formed part of the first congregation of Independents gathered together by Mr. Bennet, as indicated in the next chapter.

About 1690, the Rev. Robert Seddon, who was born at Prestwich, and one of the ejected ministers, came to reside in Bolton, after having laboured in Manchester. He was probably attracted here because it was a favourite resort for the suffering clergy. He purchased a house at the top of Bank Street, then called Windy Bank, and here he lived for several years, ministering to the Nonconformist conventicle in Deansgate and Mealhouse Lane. Then he gave them the land on which Bank Street Chapel now stands, for the erection of a more commodious sanctuary. Calamy says of him : " He was a man of great piety, patience, and meekness; a solid, zealous, and useful preacher, instrumental in the conversion of many souls. He was mighty in the Scriptures, having known them from a child, and he never once used a concordance in composing his sermons for thirty years together."

In 1696 the new meeting-house was opened at the top of Windy Bank. That was the origin of Bank Street Chapel. Robert Seddon was not a Unitarian, and neither were the congregation who subscribed money for the building. Unitarianism was not openly preached in the chapel for at least half-a-century after it was built.

The nephew of this R. Seddon was the Rev. Samuel Bourn, under whose ministry Bank Street Chapel was erected as a Presbyterian Church.

CHAPTER III.

ESTABLISHMENT OF CONGREGATIONALISM LOCALLY.

Dissatisfaction with Wesleyanism—Building of first Wesleyan Chapel—Rev. George Whitefield preaches Calvinistic Views—107 Members form New Church—Objections to Trust Deed—Secession.

How Congregationalism locally was born out of dissatisfaction with Methodism will now be shown, as all evidence points clearly to the fact that Mr. Bennet, to whom is given the credit of raising the Congregational standard in this town, was in the first instance one of “Mr. Wesley’s Helpers.”

We certainly find him in this position and also associated with others, who had, undoubtedly, given themselves to Mr. Wesley, “to serve him as sons in the Gospel.”

At the first Wesleyan Conference, held June 25th, 1744, at the “Foundery” in London; Mr. Bennet was invited to attend as one of the workers in connection with that movement, and Mr. Wesley thus records the circumstance: “In 1744 I wrote to several clergymen, and *to all who then served me as sons in the Gospel*, desiring them to meet me in London, and to give me their advice concerning the best method of carrying on the work of God.” This invitation was accepted, and Mr. Bennet was admitted to the first Conference, and from that time was formally recognised as “a Methodist preacher.” Again, at the second Conference, held in Bristol, in August, 1745, the question was asked, “Who are our present Assistants?” The answer was, “Jonathan Reeves, James Wealthy, John Nelson, John Bennet, and others.” This in conjunction with the evidence previously offered, shows very clearly what Mr. Bennet’s previous training was. In 1747, a Religious Society, under the care of Mr. Bennet, existed, and numbered twenty-nine persons, before the time of his separation from Methodism, which came at a later date. A Conference of Methodists was held in London which began on November 16th, 1749, and the first question for discussion was, “Can there be any such thing as a general union of our

Societies throughout England?" The discussion on this led to the appointment of one person in each of the nine large circuits then existing, as Mr. Wesley's *special representative*. John Bennet was appointed to this office for the "Cheshire Circuit," and was thus invested with a degree of authority in the Methodist Societies in Lancashire, which he could not have previously possessed, or obtained otherwise.

Being still most violently persecuted in their open-air meetings, and steadily opposed and preached against when possible by the Clergy of the Established Church, the Methodists began to build preaching-houses for themselves, and were rapidly becoming possessed of considerable property. At first these houses became the personal property of Mr. Wesley, and afterwards a form of Indenture was established to be used in the settlement of Wesleyan Methodist Chapels, or Houses, as they were then called, in which "it was recommended that all public buildings erected by the Methodists should be held by the Trustees, upon special trust and confidence, and to the intent that they, and the survivors of them, and the trustees for the time being, do and shall permit John Wesley, late of Lincoln College, Oxford, Clerk, and such other persons as he shall from time to time appoint, and at all times during his natural life, and no other persons, to have and enjoy the free use of the said premises," etc., etc. The remaining Clauses gave equal rights to Mr. Charles Wesley, after Mr. John Wesley's death, and to William Grimshaw, of Haworth, in the County of York, and in this form the first proprietors of the houses were to make it over to the trustees.

It was really the terms of this deed that caused the split between Mr. Wesley and Mr. Bennet, together with the preaching of Mr. Wesley against what he deemed the "Calvinism" of Mr. Whitefield, and the violent measures he had adopted against some who sympathised with him.

One of the thoughts that appears to have been repugnant to Mr. Wesley at this time was, that any power, save that of submission, was vested in the people. Hence, he strongly opposed the *free* government of the Methodist Societies which were then established. Everything ought to be under his own control, and just in accordance with his command. This sort of spiritual despotism was contrary to the minds of a

people who were so richly endowed with a love of freedom, and thus they could never tamely endure such an autocratic rule. Disaffection and dissatisfaction soon manifested themselves then, and in succeeding years of the existence of Methodism.

In 1751, the Methodist Society in Bolton numbered more than 100 persons. These, seeing how desirable it was that they should have a settled meeting place, determined to erect a Preaching-house, in which they might worship God.

On the 2nd of May, 1751, they obtained land for this purpose in Acresfield, the site being part of the land on which the premises formerly occupied by the Manchester and County Bank stands, in Hotel Street, and which is now used for insurance offices. Soon afterwards a commodious place of worship was erected. This building, by Mr. Grimshaw's directions, in accordance with Mr. Wesley's idea of the government of the Methodist Societies, was made over to certain Trustees, and without asking the consent of Mr. Bennet's Society in Bolton, Mr. Grimshaw ordered the lawyer, who was employed to make out the Deed for this Meeting-house, to insert Clauses, the effect of which was to give the Wesleys and himself absolute power over it, and the sole right of appointing trustees after it was out of debt ; so that they could exclude from the pulpit, either Mr. Bennet, or any other preacher who might dissent from their opinions. From Methodist sources we learn this was " all perfectly regular, as those who know anything of the History of Early Methodism, or of the character of the Rev. William Grimshaw, will be quite willing to admit."

This place was usually known as the " Cob of Coal Chapel," an appellation derived through the evangelising influence of one of its lady members. She decided to start a mission among the colliers in a neighbouring village, and went to address the men each day as they were leaving the pits for home. These visits soon became appreciated, and some of them noticed that the lady had nothing to stand upon when talking to them, so therefore they brought her a huge cob of coal for this purpose. This she accepted, and made use of, and when the Chapel came to be erected in Hotel Street, this cob was conveyed thither and placed in the sanctuary as a memorial of the lady's missionary zeal amongst the colliers. It remained there until the Ridgway Gates Chapel was erected and the

Hotel Street building given up. The coal was afterwards found crumbled and embedded in the ground when this building came to be altered.

This first Wesleyan Chapel in Bolton was demolished in May, 1870, in order that premises for the Manchester and County Bank could be erected. It was in that humble, unsightly, broken-down block of buildings, as they looked at this time, that the few earnest adherents of the great Wesley first hymned their joint praises as being the possessors of a little place of worship of their own. The dwellers in this "Methodist preaching house" so grew that in a few years they had doubled their numbers, and the Acresfield establishment became too small; therefore, in 1777, on the 16th of April, Mr. Wesley came to Bolton to open the "new house" at Ridgeway Gates. It is said that not much money was subscribed towards the erection of the old building, and consequently a considerable debt remained upon it for several years. In order to remove this debt, Mr. Pawson made a collection through the circuit, and two years after Mr. Alexander Mather did the same, the two collections amounting to £53, and the remaining debt was liquidated by grants from conference.

Mr. Bennet was not the man to hide or cloak his real opinions, and as he did not agree or see eye to eye with Mr. Wesley on several other points of his doctrine and views, the natural outcome was a split between the two.

Not long before the building of this Preaching-house, the Rev. George Whitefield visited Bolton, and preached to a great number of people. His views were strongly Calvinistic concerning predestination, and he found it impossible to agree with the Wesleys in their doctrinal teaching, for they embraced the Armenian view.

Mr. Bennet seems to have received settled Calvinistic views, and very shortly afterwards he avowed them openly. The religious opinions of the members assembled together for worship up to that time had never been questioned. The condition of admission to the Society being simply "a desire to flee from the wrath to come, and to be saved from their sins." Calvinists were as welcome to join the ranks as were the Armenians, and as a matter of fact, did so in considerable numbers.

Mr. Bennet having gradually worked himself to clear and settled convictions respecting the doctrines on which Mr. Wesley and Mr. Whitefield differed, came to Bolton to preach in December, 1751. Instead, however, of doing this in the way he had formerly been accustomed to do, he publicly renounced his connection with Mr. Wesley in these words: "I have no longer any connection with Mr. Wesley. He denies the 'Perseverance of Saints,' and asserts sinless Perfection. Now I desire that all of you who are of my mind will follow me." All but nineteen did this, and formed themselves into a separate society of "Calvinistic Methodists."

The eventual outcome of this step was that Mr. Bennet and those who followed him agreed to leave the Meeting-house they had built, in the hands of Mr. Wesley and his few adherents, and to form an independent society of their own. This they did on the 3rd of April, 1752, and from here marks the beginning of the Congregational movement in this town. They numbered 107 persons, and amongst them were four of the seven Trustees of the building which they had vacated. No new Trustees were appointed in the place of those who thus left with Mr. Bennet, and it was not till May 13th, 1766, fourteen years afterwards, that a second Trust Deed was made, to modify the old one.

Although Mr. Wesley endeavoured to clear himself in connection with the Trust Deed, the power to appoint preachers to the Methodist Chapels was claimed and exercised by Mr. Wesley during his life, and at his death was given to the "Yearly Conference of the People called Methodists." The Trustees have power to prevent any who are not thus appointed from occupying the pulpits, and can cause to be suspended from his office, any minister who preaches doctrines contrary to those preached by Mr. Wesley, although that minister may have been appointed by the Conference itself.

Thus the claim is advanced "That no people have the doctrines of the gospel, as taught and embraced by their forefathers, are so well protected as the Wesleyan Methodists."

It will thus be seen that Duke's Alley Chapel originated partly in the dissent of the early Methodists respecting Doctrine and Church property.

Originally, the Chapel there was but a small room,

without pews, not half the capacity of the present venerable structure that still stands on the site.

CHAPTER IV.

ERECTION OF DUKE'S ALLEY CHAPEL.

Starting Duke's Alley Chapel—Other Places of Worship Erected—Bank Street Chapel Split—Death of Mr. Bennet.

Mr. Bennet commenced preaching, two days after the separation, in the Market-house, which his friends had procured for the purpose, and in the house of Richard Ashworth. The services were continued in these two places, and occasionally in the Old Mealhouse, with great results ; many persons being led to join the society in spite of its unsettled condition. Mr. Bennet continued his visits and his labours, until it became necessary to provide a suitable place of meeting for the seceding society.

The history of the venerable edifice which was erected as the result of the needs of this first independent congregation which was formed in Bolton on April 3rd, 1752, and which consisted of 107 members, carries the mind back with interest and appreciation of the labours and the difficulties met with and surmounted at this time.

The land for this place was leased by Mr. Bennet on the 8th of September, 1753, and on it was erected Duke's Alley Chapel, which was opened for divine worship in the following year, 1754. For a long time this Chapel was called "Oliver Chapel," from its associations with Oliver Ormrod, a local notability, and one of its earliest Trustees. Originally this was only a large room possessing neither gallery nor pews, being merely provided with benches, and had small leaded windows, the entrance being from Chapel Alley, off Deansgate. The benches would be arranged so as to separate the men and the women, according to the unvarying custom prevailing at that time. After this place was opened, a very zealous work was undertaken by the workers in the propagation of their views. The Constitution of the Church was open and liberal. No form of church government is indicated in the Deed, which

was made under the direction of Mr. Bennet. The house being set apart for the use of a Congregation of Protestant Dissenters. The only restrictions it contains are those which guard the property from being used by any other than a congregation of orthodox dissenters. Its basis is Calvinistic, and its references are to the Westminster Confession.

At this time freedom of thought was very progressive, and the growing spirit of tolerance in the nation, rendered it practicable and safe to advocate doctrines, both in the pulpit and through the press, which in former times would have brought those who preached them within the pale of the law.

The Friends, the Baptists, and the Independents, animated by the same spirit as the Presbyterians, built houses of worship wherever a congregation of sufficient strength could be gathered together, and thus their power of diffusing the principles of Nonconformity grew and strengthened. Hitherto little or nothing had been done to make religion popular, and Independents brought constantly into comparison with the Established Church, its clergy, and its services, sought to unite the dignity and solemnity of the old religion with the fervour and purity of the new profession. In sermons they ran through the five points of Calvin, and in their prayers indulged in dissertations on the fall and the atonement, and on the saved and the damned.

It was only by the earnest preaching of men who were spiritually in advance of their hearers, that it began to be doubted whether, in the evangelisation of the world, learning is as requisite as faith, hope, and charity. The movement was a highly interesting one, and developed the religious wants of the nation, until a system was organised of voluntary service, by which the principles were carried into every portion of the land.

In the early periods of the history of dissent, diversity of opinion was merged in the greater principle of Nonconformity, which constituted the bond of union as a religious party. Once well established; controversies upon points of faith developed wider differences of theological opinion, and separations and secessions followed as a natural consequence. From the original Presbyterian Congregation, which worshipped in Bank Street Chapel came an important addition to those who

had started Duke's Alley Chapel, and these added to their numbers and influence.

First, Arianism was the basis of worship at Bank Street Chapel, which was started under a deed of gift, which gave the congregation there a very free hand, then Unitarianism began to be preached more openly by Mr. Thomas Dixon, who was the minister from April, 1753, to February, 1754, and on his death the smouldering fires of the doctrines of the original attendants came to a head. The religious opinions entertained and zealously advocated by that minister, were by no means calculated to reconcile that portion of the congregation whose leanings were towards Calvinism, and the faith of their fathers, and the standards of their Church, so that it is not surprising to find that their dissatisfaction was openly expressed, and considerable dissension was the result. Efforts to obtain a Calvinistic minister, and to secure the promulgation of doctrines in accordance with the teachings of former times, were in vain, and, thoroughly disheartened, they gave up the Chapel and Endowments to the majority, and joined themselves to Mr. Bennet's Society, in Duke's Alley Chapel.

The Congregational Church in Duke's Alley had thus a double origin. It could trace its descent on the one hand from that noble band of Nonconformist worthies of 1662; on the other, from those who occupied the foremost place in the great revival movement of the previous century.

After the establishment of this place of worship, Mr. Bennet avowed himself as "a Congregational Independent."

A Chapel was erected for him at Warburton, Cheshire, at which he was solemnly ordained and set apart to the pastoral office. Old habits, however, held him, and therefore he could not confine his ministry to one people, but made excursions to various parts of the country, visiting the societies he had formed and superintended, and thereby encouraging them in the work of the Lord. His apostolic labours won for him the cordial friendship of the Countess of Huntingdon, and it was by her persuasion that he was induced to commence the preaching of the gospel. He was the sower who went forth to sow. Others reaped the results of his labours, and we need to remember his services locally at all times.

His work was soon done. At the early age of 45 years, on

the 24th of May, 1759, he passed to his reward. Though death came so soon, it came not as an enemy, but as a crowning glory to a period of devoted service and work for the Master. He is deservedly called "the Founder of the first Independent Church in Bolton," for, the Church of to-day inherits and upholds the Christian devotedness of our forefathers, whose love and service have enabled us to be so richly endowed with the good things for which they laboured.

CHAPTER V. CONTINUING THE WORK.

First Preachers—Mr. James—Rev. John Whitford—Rev. James Wraith—First Enlargement of Chapel—Removals of Mr. Wraith—Rev. Robert Simpson—Further Enlargement of Chapel—Call to London—Refusal—Acceptance of Second Call—Tutor of Hoxton Academy—His Work and Death.

For some years the preachers at Duke's Alley Chapel were the helpers of the Rev. George Whitefield, who were in the habit of visiting Bolton when making a circuit of the various Calvinistic Methodist Societies in the district. To Mr. James, one of these helpers, is given the credit of being the first minister who served the Church as its ordained pastor. He was succeeded by the Rev. John Whitford, who preached first in connection with Mr. Wesley, but afterwards attached himself to Mr. Whitefield. His temper nullified to a certain extent the effect of his usefulness as a Christian teacher. After his resignation the Church was for a considerable time without a pastor.

The Rev. James Wraith was the first settled pastor, of whom there is any reliable account, and he commenced his labours in 1772, having previously supplied the pulpit for a short time. He received and accepted a unanimous invitation to become the Pastor, and in the autumn of the same year was ordained, and entered upon his duties with zeal. He remained in Bolton ten years, and laboured with great acceptance and success, so much so, that the Chapel became too small to accommodate the congregation, and galleries round the Church had to be erected. It is recorded to

his honour that he did not disdain to join the people in this work, and, having some knowledge of building, directed the workmen, who belonged to the congregation, who were not able to give much money, but who freely gave their time and labour. The minister, it is said—notwithstanding his full-bottomed wig—pulled off his coat, and gave a helping hand whenever necessary.

In his Autobiography, he says : “ I delivered four sermons every week at home ; one or two evenings were spent in adjoining parishes ; and it gives me pleasure to say, that in the principal places where I preached, within about six miles of Bolton, chapels have been built, congregations raised, and ministers settled.” He had as assistant a part of his time the Rev. J. Snelgar.

Thus early began those evangelising influences which have been such a feature in connection with the life and work of our Church and congregation.

The loss of one of his Deacons, and the death of another valuable Member of the Church, together with the extreme Calvinistic views which some of the people entertained and constantly obtruded, led him eventually to resign and seek another charge. This step was greatly regretted, and he left in 1782, carrying with him the esteem and benediction of the people amongst whom he had so successfully laboured. He was in reality dismissed because he did not preach Calvinistic doctrines strong enough to suit the party who eventually seceded and formed the Scotch Church in 1803. He afterwards formed a Church at Wolverhampton, where he also stayed another ten years, when he was invited to engage in the services at the Tabernacle and Tottenham Court Road Chapel, London, but declined this, and spent some little time in Chorley instead. He finally settled at Hampstead, and there spent the last 21 years of his valuable life, dying on May 1st, 1815, aged 81 years.

His successor was the Rev. Robert Simpson, a mighty man of God, who was ordained as minister at Duke's Alley on October 2nd, 1782. In this sphere he gave himself up with earnestness to the duties appertaining thereto, and by a constant application to study, enriched his mind and augmented his stores of intellectual wealth, spending whole nights in



The late REV. ROBERT SIMPSON, D.D.
Minister of Duke's Alley Chapel from 1782 to 1791, and afterwards
Tutor of Hoxton Academy, London.

*Presented to St. George's Road Congregational Church, Bolton,
by William Cooper Jones, 1895.*

these pursuits. He preached with great fervour and energy, both in his own pulpit and in the surrounding towns and villages, his labours being crowned with great success. Possessing a solid judgment, considerable acuteness of discernment, and clear views of the doctrines of grace, he is said to have enjoyed great liberty in the pulpit.

The increasing congregation which the Doctor's talents did not fail to draw, rendered necessary a further enlargement of the Chapel, which was made about the year 1785.

This work, involving as it did the expenditure of several hundred pounds, left the Chapel in debt, even after the people had given to the fullest extent of their ability. To remove this debt, Dr. Simpson was requested by his people to visit London for the purpose of seeking contributions. He went in July, 1786, and seeing that he was a perfect stranger, appearances were not much in his favour. By means of his preaching he made himself known, and became exceedingly popular, with the result that his mission was a satisfactory one, and he returned to Bolton after an absence of about three months. He was much indebted at this time to the kindness of the Rev. T. Wills, then at Silver Street. He was requested to preach at Crispin Street Chapel while in London, the pulpit being then vacant. His talents were highly appreciated there, and a resolution to invite him to preach three Sabbaths, with a view to settlement amongst them, was very readily passed. This resolution they honourably acquainted to their brethren at Bolton, and advanced various reasons to induce them to resign their Pastor. When these wishes were made known to the Doctor, he left the decision of the case entirely to the Church at Bolton. They refused to relinquish him, and manifested their attachment to him by an immediate effort to increase his comfort. He, however, complied with the invitation to preach these three Sabbaths at Crispin Street, and this was followed by a second visit to London in November of the same year. He was later on again called to a more important sphere. The Evangelical Academy, at Mile End, was destitute of a Tutor in consequence of the resignation, in 1790, of Dr. Addington. The managers of that institution having taken new premises at Hoxton, were very anxious to have a good successor. On making enquiries they were advised to make

application to Doctor Simpson. This they did, and sent him a very pressing invitation to accept the office. For some time he could not see his way, and urged his want of suitable talent to be a Tutor. The correspondence, however, strengthened the conviction in the minds of the managers that he was the man for the office, and they repeated the invitation. He then laid the matter before the Church and congregation. They felt that the time had come when they must yield him up, and very sorrowfully expressed their opinion that he was bound to follow what they could not but regard as the path of duty. He therefore accepted the invitation, and resigned his charge.

As soon as possible he arranged his affairs in Bolton, and, after a ministry of nine years, took leave of his beloved flock in a farewell sermon, which he preached in March, 1791, from Philippians, 1st Chapter, 27th Verse :—" Only let your conversation be as it becometh the Gospel of Christ ; that, whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the Gospel." This sermon was delivered to a crowded congregation, and was the occasion of great and mutual emotion, himself and his people being melted into tears. Amid their affectionate and sorrowful benedictions, he took his departure to his new field of labour.

The Doctor remained at Hoxton for twenty-seven years ; and educated 230 Christian Ministers. For the first six years he was the sole Tutor, but his health failing him somewhat through incessant application, he had a colleague assigned to him in 1797. The character of the College was speedily improved under his presidency, the applications for admission were largely increased, and it was speedily found necessary to provide accommodation for twenty-seven students. Two assistant Tutors were then appointed, and at the close of his life his colleagues were the Rev. J. Hooper and the Rev. Dr. Burder, with whom he had been associated nine years.

Besides his daily duties, the Doctor preached much, in the early part of his academic career, in various parts of London. He then took a small Chapel in Hoxton, and was afterwards instrumental in the building of Hoxton Academy Chapel, which was opened by the Rev. W. Jay, of Bath, on October

21st, 1796. Here he preached for many years, until invited by the Church in Artillery Street to become their Pastor. He only laboured there two years, and never afterwards could be induced to sustain pastoral relations.

He was one of the men who planned and published the *Evangelical Magazine*—the early pages of which are enriched by contributions from his pen, signed “Nospmis,” and it must not be overlooked that he also took part in the establishment of the London Missionary Society, attending the meetings of the committee, and assisting them by his counsel, eventually retiring from the more public and popular fields of action to give himself up entirely to the one business of his life.

Blessed with a strong and vigorous constitution, he pursued his course without interruption from sickness, until within four years of his death, which took place on Sunday, December 21st, 1817. In all parts of the country, ministers he had educated, paid their last tribute of respect to his memory by preaching funeral sermons. He died in the bosom of his family—in the scene of his labours, in the field of glory, full of days (72 years), full of honours, blessing and being blest.

He was a man universally admired for his primitive simplicity of manners, his modesty and humility, and his ardent love of evangelical truth.

His remains were interred in Bunhill Fields, London.

CHAPTER VI.

FURTHER MINISTERS AND WORK.

Rev. W. Maurice—Scheme of Removal Defeated—Call to Fetter Lane Chapel, London—Establishment of Sunday School—Compiles Hymn Book — Rev. Joseph Sowdon — Another Enlargement — Removal to Blackburn—Advice to Form a Second Church—Start of Mawdsley Street Chapel—Rev. W. Jones—Success of his Work.

Immediately after the removal of Dr. Simpson, the pulpit at Duke's Alley was filled by the Rev. W. Maurice, from Stockport, as the settled Pastor, in the month of October, 1791.

He also was remarkably successful and useful, and again it became necessary to provide additional accommodation.

A majority of the Church agreed to the erection of a new Chapel, and land was taken for that purpose in Blackhorse Street. At this juncture Mr. Maurice received an invitation to settle in Devonport, where he had gone as a supply for a few weeks during his vacation. He at once wrote to his people and stated that he was unwilling to leave them, and urged them to proceed as quickly as possible with the new building. A small minority, however, took advantage of this circumstance to carry their opposition to a removal to a new Chapel, and this caused the scheme to be abandoned.

Shortly after this Mr. Maurice received a call from the Church in Fetter Lane, London. This he immediately accepted, and resigned his charge at Bolton, after a ministry of five years. He settled at Fetter Lane on March 22nd, 1797, and there he died on March 31st, 1802, in the fortieth year of his age, having sustained the pastorate five years. In connection with his death a funeral sermon was preached in Claremont Chapel by the Rev. J. Blackburn.

His public life was divided into three equal portions of five years each, his first charge having been at Stockport.

Probably the most noteworthy thing accomplished during the ministry of Mr. Maurice in Bolton, was the establishment of the *first Congregational Sunday School* in 1796, in connection with our denomination locally. This was conducted for several years in a room in Moor Lane, and was productive of great benefit.

In 1811, this was removed to premises adjoining the Chapel. These were enlarged in 1818, and eventually came to be used as vestry, library, and class-rooms. When the growth of the school made such a venture necessary, the recognised school was erected as a separate building. We cannot, however, claim to be the originators of the Sunday School work in Bolton, but only as regards our own denomination.

Mr. Maurice possessed talents that eminently fitted him for the work of the ministry. His mind was capacious and energetic. His judgment solid, and his imagination vigorous. In person he was tall and commanding, and there was an irresistible fascination in his looks. Naturally of an active temperament, he was quick to a fault. His attachments were

uncommonly warm, his resentments keen. Integrity, openness, and independence, were the leading features of his character.

As a preacher he was faithful, energetic, and eloquent. His discourses always displayed a highly cultivated mind, and an extensive acquaintance with Divine Truth.

Shortly before leaving Bolton, Mr. Maurice received into the Church Mr. (Rev.) James Mather, who was born at Leigh, and afterwards settled in Bolton, subsequently accepting calls to Sheffield, Birmingham, and London.

He was also much in request for Ordination Services and many other public occasions, and he compiled the selection of Hymns that was used in the services at Duke's Alley Chapel, Bolton.

A copy of this Hymn Book, in most excellent condition, and bearing the signature of the late Benjamin Hick, Bolton, August 7th, 1841, has very kindly been loaned to me by Mr. Tom Davy, who picked up the same in an old bookshop in Manchester.

The book is entitled "Carmina Evangelica; or, Hymns chiefly collected from various authors, by William Maurice, Minister of Duke's Alley Chapel.

Eternal years my theme shall be
That Jesus Liv'd and Dy'd for Me.

Bolton: Printed by R. M. Holden, Bookseller, Mealhouse Lane, 1839."

This book is addressed to the Church and Congregation of Independent Protestant Dissenters assembling in Duke's Alley, Bolton. Many of the hymns in this book we still sing to-day from our present book, and the hymns of Watts seem to figure largely therein. The book is signed:—

"Your affectionate Pastor,
"Bolton,
"13th September, 1792."
"W. MAURICE."

After his resignation the Church was without a Pastor for four years, being in that interval supplied by candidates and others, and no little difficulty was experienced in fixing on a suitable successor.

At length the choice was made of the Rev. Joseph Sowdon, and he became the minister in 1801.

The congregation declined during the four unsettled years, but Mr. Sowdon soon attracted a larger congregation, and the Church was filled to overflowing, so much so, that another enlargement was rendered necessary. Nobly did the people respond to the call that was then made upon them. They resolved to be burdensome to no man. At whatever sacrifice they wished to be independent of other Churches, and their united contributions on this occasion amounted to £650. The cost of these alterations, which were effected in 1803, came to nearly £900, and appeals had to be made elsewhere. These were liberally responded to, but it was not till 1810, that a sufficient sum was raised to meet the debt in full.

During his ministry a section seceded from the church and erected the Presbyterian Chapel at the end of Deansgate, which had an unfortunate history and was subsequently pulled down and substituted by the present Church of England edifice dedicated to St. Paul. This Scotch Chapel was in reality built by Duke's Alley people in the first instance, and its history is given in the next chapter.

The prosperity which characterised the first few years of Mr. Sowdon's ministry was not continuous. Various circumstances connected with the Church and with his own family, interfered with his comfort and usefulness, and in 1813 he removed to Blackburn, where he remained nine years, dying there on January 22nd, 1822, in the seventy-seventh year of his age. He was buried at his own request, under the pulpit of the Chapel in which he had ministered during the last nine years of his life.

As a preacher he was plain, earnest, and practical, and his style singularly direct and pointed. His theology was of the old school.

In 1807 there was a second secession and a new congregation was formed, which, after meeting for some time in the Cloth Hall, erected the Independent Chapel in Mawdsley Street. Thus, during the pastorate of Mr. Sowdon, the old Independent Chapel in Mawdsley Street was built, and the founding of the future Mawdsley Street interest appears to have been its most outstanding feature.

In the latter part of the year 1807, Dr. Simpson visited the scene of his former ministry, and advised that an endeavour

should be made to form a second Independent Congregation. This they decided should be done, and requested him to send them a student from his college. This project was really started some years earlier, and a vote of the Church taken to "dismiss a number of the members for this purpose" recorded; this intention, however, seems to have been abandoned in face of the difficulties then surrounding the Church and congregation.

Dr. Simpson was not a man to be easily daunted, and in his sociable interviews with his friend, Mr. Greenall, he expressed his determination to remain in Bolton until he had cleared the way for the formation of this second Independent establishment, which was really intended to take the Presbyterian interest, which had been started in 1803 in Moor Lane, and which was somewhat under a cloud at this time.

The Presbyterians, however, decided to make a strong effort themselves to raise another congregation, and the consequence was, that when the student named Mr. Knight came from Hoxton, the place in which he expected to preach was occupied.

To meet the difficulty, the Cloth Hall was rented, and a few Duke's Alley people who were discontented, and probably a few of the Presbyterians also, met to worship there.

In accordance with the terms of a former resolution, on December 22nd, 1807, five members of the Church in Duke's Alley requested their dismissal, that they might form themselves into a separate Church for the spread of the Gospel.

This was readily granted to them, and a memorandum to the following effect also:—

"The brethren, John Smith, William Southworth, John Reily, Richard Gregson, and William Titterington, having by a note, bearing date December 22nd, 1807, requested our Pastor to stop the Church this day, in order to procure them their dismissal, with a view to form themselves into a separate Church. In compliance with their request, we dismiss them accordingly, wishing them the Lord's presence in every scriptural undertaking.

"Signed by order of the Church,

"JOSEPH SOWDON, Pastor.

"JOHN TURNER
"JOHN RITCHIE
"JOHN HASLAM

JOHN HART
NATHL. LASSELL
ROBT. RUTHERFORD

} Deacons."

As soon as possible afterwards, the above-named five brethren assembled themselves together for public worship,

on the evening of January 13th, 1808. The Rev. Samuel Bradley, of Manchester, presided at this meeting, and formed them into a Christian Church.

A discourse on the nature of a Gospel Church was first delivered, and then having received the pledge of their union, he commended them to God in prayer.

Afterwards an address was delivered on the duties arising out of the relations which church members sustain, from John xiv., 15 : " If ye love me, keep my commandments."

The Rev. William Jones, a student from the Hoxton Academy, was present on that occasion, and to him the newly-formed Church presented a call to the pastoral office, and although six months had to elapse ere Mr. Jones completed his college term in London, he entered upon his stated labours on July 28th, 1808. This was his only pastorate, and he was minister for thirty-four years. He was ordained as minister on the 3rd of September, 1808.

In the meantime, the Church began to receive accessions to its numbers, and when Mr. Jones settled the five had increased to twenty-five. This prosperous state of things encouraged them to consider the erection of a Chapel, and one gentleman, Mr. Greenall, advanced £2,000 for that purpose. Land was leased in Mawdsley Street on the 17th of June, 1808, and before March, 1809, the Chapel was opened for public worship. Soon afterwards a Sunday School was established in a small way, the girls meeting in a room in Pitfield's yard, Old Acres, and the boys in Mr. Greenall's warehouse in Blackhorse Street. This separation was soon felt to be undesirable, and the boys began to meet in a cottage behind the Chapel, which was ultimately enlarged. The School, however, began to increase in numbers so rapidly that a new School was built at a cost of about £1,200. As a separate history of this second interest has already been published, it is not necessary to deal with the first daughter Church established from Duke's Alley any further. It was a peaceable, friendly offshoot, and has been doing good work for God over a hundred years.

The first minister of the Church, William Jones, was truly a man of power, a brave, true-hearted servant of God, and among those shaped under God by his ministry were some of the worthiest Christian people we have ever known.

CHAPTER VII.

UPS AND DOWNS.

The Scotch Chapel—Failure of the Work—Attempts at Sale—Building Loaned to the Baptists—And Sold to the Unitarians—Failure to Work a Satisfactory Interest—Rented by Wesleyans—Methodist Free Church—Seceders from Mawdsley Street Chapel—Used by Unitarians again—Site now occupied by St. Paul's Church.

For many years Duke's Alley Chapel was the only Calvinistic place of worship in the town, and all the Scotch people coming to the town naturally gravitated towards it. The many Scotch Presbyterians, therefore, who had settled in the town, very naturally frequented this place, and soon after Mr. Sowdon began to preach there was more than the average number of such persons in the congregation. They, therefore, thought it would be as well if they could have a Church formed on a model which seemed to commend itself to them, and to be connected with a Presbytery. Therefore, in a very friendly spirit, they decided to secede, and eventually built the Chapel at the beginning of Moor Lane.

This was a most unpretentious building, and it had a very chequered career after being opened in 1803.

The Rev. James Smith was appointed to it, but did not succeed in getting a good congregation. Difficulties of various kinds were encountered, and early in 1807 they were inclined to relinquish the attempt. Fresh enthusiasm prevailed, and in November, 1807, they made their second effort. The Rev. George Lawson was appointed as minister, and he entered upon his labours on October 18th, 1809, continuing until December, 1814, five years. He did not succeed in raising a good congregation, and the effort fell through.

This Chapel, which was known by the name of the St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, or, more commonly, the "Scotch Chapel," was closed, and remained unoccupied for a long time, being offered for sale by the Trustees who were very anxious to dispose of it.

This was not possible at the time, so the Baptists were allowed to have temporary use of it by paying the ground

rent, about £25. On these terms a public re-opening of the Chapel in connection with the Baptist denomination took place in May, 1819. Some good work was done here, and "the Word was blessed to the conversion of some who gladly followed the Lord in the ordinance of believers' baptism." Strange to say, part of these were baptised in the Middle Brook, and others in the River Tonge, close to the Cemetery Bridge, Bury Road. All seemed to be going well at this period, but the Trustees, to whom the Chapel belonged, were very anxious to be clear of their charge, and as the Baptists were not able to arrange matters, it was offered for sale by public auction, and sold to a congregation of Unitarians, who then worshipped in the Cloth Hall, under the ministry of the Rev. George Harris, for the sum of £900, subject to a ground rent. This was in the year 1822. This rendered a new place necessary for the Baptists, who in turn occupied the Cloth Hall, until they were able to obtain a site in Moor Lane, and a Chapel was erected there the same year at a cost of about £825.

The Unitarians, who had bought the Scotch Chapel, held it until 1843, their first minister here being very successful.

They were seceders from Bank Street who took this place, and tried for several years to maintain the struggle for an independent existence, but eventually several causes contributed to the closing of the Chapel, and the amalgamation of the congregation with that of Bank Street again. Although negotiations for this purpose were entered into in 1839, it was not finally accomplished until Sunday, 4th June, 1843.

The Rev. George Harris was somewhat famous in his day for his controversial tendencies and abilities, and held his people together here for five years. It was a few incautious remarks of his against Orthodox belief which led George Hadfield, Esq., of Manchester, M.P. for Sheffield, to commence his famous suit to rescue the funds of Lady Hewley's Charity out of the hands of the Unitarians—a suit which for more than a quarter of a century, and almost single handed, he followed up until he ultimately succeeded. Now this valuable fund is apportioned among "Poor Ministers of Christ's Holy Gospel" amongst the Independents, Baptists, and Presbyterians.

After this, the Chapel at Moor Lane was rented by the Wesleyans for a short period only. They were followed by the

members of the Methodist Free Church, who retained possession until they were able to build a new Chapel in Bowker's Row, in 1846. This congregation removed later to Albert Place, when the amalgamation of both churches took place, as recorded later in the book.

Yet another attempt was made in 1851 by a number of seceders from Mawdsley Street this time, who finally removed to Albert Place Chapel also.

The Unitarians once more acquired possession of the place for temporary purposes, during the time that the old Bank Street Chapel was being pulled down and the new one erected. At the Moor Lane Chapel no organ was installed, the music having usually been supplied by a small instrumental band. When the Bank Street congregation worshipped there, the organ from Bank Street was also temporarily transferred there. Occasionally the building was let as a lecture hall to Mr. Bradlaugh, and others, among whom was the Rev. Dr. Verity. In the late sixties, the Moor Lane Chapel was sold and pulled down, and finally St. Paul's Church was erected upon part of the site.

Thus, well within the confines of a single century, this site has been utilised for some very remarkable ecclesiastical changes, and experienced ups and downs which are surprising to the average citizen. Truly the various denominations were closely interwoven in their early days locally, and modern developments resulted that were different than their founders originally anticipated.

CHAPTER VIII.

TROUBLESONE TIMES.

Rev. Joseph Fox—Enlargement of Schools—Rev. Samuel Ellis—Further Extension Carried Out—First Organ Introduced—Children's Treat—Sick Club—Library—Mr. Ellis called to Wilmslow—Presented with Gold Watch and Letter of Appreciation—Reply of Mr. Ellis—Rev. Richard Brown—Total Abstinence Society—Early Teaching Difficulties—Teachers' Secession Eventually Settled by Arbitration.

For about five years the Church was without a pastor after Mr. Sowdon resigned, and during that time the

congregation gradually lessened through deaths, removals, and other circumstances. The Rev. Joseph Fox was the next minister to receive a call to the Pastorate, he being at that time a student in Airdale College.

The call was accepted, and he was ordained on November 5th, 1818, and laboured in Bolton with great acceptance and success, being spoken of as being mighty in the Scriptures. Mr. Fox laboured here successfully for eight years, and was a fine type of the old school of ministers—a man of godly simplicity and sincerity—though he would have been deemed “narrow” by many of our present-day workers.

One feature during his time of service here was an enlargement of the schools which adjoined the Chapel, at an expense of about £180. Further developments also took place in the Church. In the autumn of 1824, the singer's gallery was erected in the Chapel, and a new pulpit introduced at the same time at a cost of a further £170. Having received an invitation to the Pastorate of Fish Street Chapel, Hull, Mr. Fox resigned his charge at the end of the year 1826, and entered upon his new duties, being formally recognised as the Pastor there on March 21st, 1827.

Another student from the same College (Airdale), the Rev. Samuel Ellis, was called the same year (1827), and accepted, labouring peacefully and successfully during the sixteen years of his ministry at Duke's Alley Chapel. He might have laboured much longer had he been properly treated.

In 1840 a further extension was deemed necessary, and new Schools and the present Chapel front was erected in Ridgway Gates. For this purpose several cottages, which formerly stood on the site of the present schools and square, were purchased and demolished to make room for these extensions, and the organ was also introduced at this time. These extensive alterations cost a good deal of money, and £1,600 was contributed at the time towards the cost which came to about £2,044.

It is curious to find in the minute book of this time an entry to the effect “that the children have their regular treat on White-Friday, with buns and ginger beer as before, and that there be a Tea Party in the School Room the same afternoon.”

In consequence of a misunderstanding in connection with the giving up of a third service, which up to that time had been held, and one or two other little matters, Mr. Ellis resigned his charge in 1843, accepting a call to service at Wilmslow.

Finding that three services on the Sabbath day were beyond his strength to maintain, and not profitable for his people, he suggested the giving up of one of them. To this they would not consent, and he therefore accepted a call to Wilmslow, in Cheshire, where he found a more considerate and appreciative people. The gentle Ellis was even more powerful in the influence of his devout life, than in his witness to the essential verities of the gospel of peace and salvation. What they would not grant to an eminent minister, after sixteen years' successful service, they did grant to the newcomer, the Rev. R. Brown, a minister of inferior ability, and who laboured amongst them unsuccessfully for three years, and then took a cemetery chaplainship in Liverpool. Ingratitude has too often been a blot on many Churches, and a readiness to do for a newcomer under the passing excitement of a change, what they never thought of doing to one who had served them so long and faithfully.

Before he left the town, a few of his friends presented him with a gold watch, as a testimonial of their esteem. The following letter accompanied the present :—

“ REV. AND DEAR SIR,—A number of your people, desirous of testifying their esteem for you, as their pastor, have resolved to present you with a small token of their regard. They regret exceedingly that, after a laborious ministry of 16 years amongst them, the connection which has subsisted between you and them should cease ; and while they look with thankfulness on the good effected by your instrumentality, they sincerely pray that, by the circumstances of your removal, it may not be blighted or checked.

“ Although the dispensation is to them afflictive and trying in an eminent degree, they rejoice that you, their beloved pastor, leave them without a stain on your character ; and feel that it would be ungrateful in them not to admire the grace of God in you, as exhibited in past and present usefulness, and in unabated, yea, in increasing attachment to our Saviour's cause ; and they trust that the souls brought to the knowledge of the truth by the blessing of God upon your labours, will be your theme of rejoicing through the countless ages of eternity.

“ Your acceptance of the gold watch accompanying this note is requested by them, and they feel that all that is left for them to do, is to commend you to the guardianship of the great Head of the Church, praying that wheresoever your

future lot, under His direction, may be cast, you may enjoy His favour and His smile, and that your last days may be your best days, more useful, more honoured, and more blessed.—SEPTEMBER 27TH, 1843."

Mr. Ellis accepted this gift, and wrote the following letter in acknowledgment thereof :—

" MY DEAR FRIENDS,—I thank you sincerely for the handsome present which has been conveyed to me as a token of your regard, and for the letter accompanying it, in which you kindly express your approval of my past services among you, and your best wishes for my future happiness and success. At the close of so long a pastorate in Bolton, it is no small pleasure for me to be assured of your continued, earnest affection. The testimonial of your esteem, which you have spontaneously offered, I most gladly accept. When I shall be placed amid other scenes, it will serve as an associating link still connecting me with you, and while it faithfully indicates to me the hour of the passing day, it will also be a remembrance of years gone by—years which were spent not unusefully in the assiduous duties of the Christian ministry among you.

" Fervently praying for your present and everlasting welfare, I remain, my dear friends,

" Yours faithfully and affectionately,

" BOLTON, SEPT. 29TH, 1843."

" SAMUEL ELLIS."

Mr. Ellis was succeeded by the Rev. Richard Brown, of Wrexham, who, however, only retained office from 1844 to 1847. The date of his resignation being July 19th, 1847.

Various unpleasant occurrences, chiefly caused through lack of tact and temper, eventually brought about his resignation, and led him to look out for another charge.

A brief statement of the position of the School in December, 1846, is :—The number of scholars on the register was 430 ; of this number 217 were males and 213 females. The number of male teachers being 17, and the female teachers 15, giving a total of 32 teachers in all.

A Sick Club and Lending Library in connection with the School was also in existence at this time, the library containing 490 volumes at this early date, and had 86 regular readers.

The Total Abstinence Society, which was started in February, 1846, and which had a very hard and uphill fight at that time, had registered 134 members for the first year.

On February 14th, 1847, the Superintendent of the School, Mr. Adam Ferguson, gave notice of his resignation of that office to the Teachers of Duke's Alley Sunday School. This states :—

" It must have been obvious to most of you that my position for some time has been one attended with much painful feeling, and one that must have been relinquished before now, but for the uniform kindness and respect which I have experienced from you all. But in addition to your confidence, the Superintendent of the School ought also to be on terms of perfect understanding and co-operation with both the minister and the Church. It is well known to you that recent circumstances have alienated me from both, and the time for accommodation appears to me to be past. I trust you will receive this notice as containing sufficient grounds for my resignation, and that I will not be called upon to enter into matters which would necessarily be of a personal nature."

After the resignation of Mr. Ferguson as superintendent, the School was placed in very peculiar circumstances owing to the resignation of 16 teachers of their several classes, and exceptional means were taken to fill the vacancies by the suspension of the Rules of the School. The matters in dispute were amicably arranged eventually, as indicated below.

To show the difficulties encountered by the teachers in the Sunday School at this time, it was thought desirable to teach the scholars who were learning the alphabet, young and old, in a room by themselves, and a cottage belonging to the Chapel being then unoccupied, the ground floor was appropriated for that purpose, and Mr. James Gooden, and Mr. William Milligan, were empowered to purchase timber for the erection of a gallery so that the infants might be taught on the collective system, with the aid of a box of movable letters.

Sunday School work was a strenuous undertaking in those days, when the learning was conspicuous by its absence.

A satisfactory basis having been formed for a reunion with those of our brethren who left us as noticed in the Minute of March 14th, 1847, a special meeting of the teachers was held on March 12th, 1848, when it was resolved unanimously " That the rule requiring one month's notice previous to the selection of any teacher be suspended for one month, and that we receive as teachers those of our friends at present labouring as Sabbath School Teachers in the Town Hall ; and they are hereby admitted as fully constituted Teachers of Duke's Alley Sunday School.

" That the above resolution be conveyed to them by the secretary and that they be requested to meet us in the upper room of the school on Tuesday evening next, the 14th inst.,

at 8-0 o'clock, in order to make further necessary arrangements for a reunion on the following Sunday."

The seceding teachers attempted to form a Sunday School of their own at the Little Bolton Town Hall, but they found the task of establishing and keeping up the work rather more than they could conveniently manage in the face of the opposition encountered, and even though they had also established a Sick Society, they finally gave up the task in despair, and the whole body went back again to Duke's Alley, the members of the Sick Society being accepted as members of the one at that place of worship, but this did not come about at once, simply because the leaders could not even then agree with the policy advocated, and the questions at issue then dragged slowly along until finally on January 28th, 1848, the Rev. Dr. Robt. Vaughan was asked by Mr. Ferguson and Mr. Lever to approach the parent body at Duke's Alley so that they might give up the Little Bolton Town Hall which they were then using as a school and preaching station every Sunday.

Nothing of a definite nature having resulted as a basis of settlement of the points in dispute, the matter was further considered on February 16th, 1848, and the following resolution agreed upon : "That negotiation between our friends worshipping in the Little Bolton Town Hall and ourselves is unnecessary ; yet, inasmuch as under the special circumstances of the case, an opinion has been expressed by Dr. Vaughan, and concurred in by some of our fellow worshippers, to the effect that it might have been better to allow a negotiation between our Town Hall friends and ourselves, with reference to their return to Duke's Alley Chapel—to be conducted by the Rev. Dr. Vaughan, Rev. R. Fletcher, and Mr. Barnes—to have been entered into, we therefore, trusting that we may at all times, and on occasions be influenced by a spirit of love and charity to all men, we defer to the opinions referred to and consent to such negotiations being commenced between ourselves and our Town Hall friends under the management of the gentlemen previously named, hoping that it may be conducted on the part of all concerned as ultimately to lead to a proper understanding of the position and duties of all affected by it, and also be a means of promoting a spirit of love

and Christian forbearance in the breasts of all the parties to it."

A conference as proposed took place, and this was followed by a meeting of four brethren appointed on behalf of the Church at Duke's Alley and four on behalf of the brethren at the Little Bolton Town Hall (now Public Library), in the vestry at Duke's Alley. In the evening of the same day, March 9th, 1848, a Church Meeting was arranged at Duke's Alley, Dr. Vaughan, Rev. R. Fletcher, and Thomas Barnes, Esq., attended as negotiators. Deacons W. Lee, H. Macoun, George Orrell, and James Nicholson attended as a deputation from the Church, and Adam Ferguson, James Lever, R. Booth, and William Howker as a deputation from the Town Hall, the object being to consult as to the best course to be pursued to effect a reunion of the friends then worshipping in the Little Bolton Town Hall with the parent Church. After some hours of serious deliberation, the following resolutions were adopted :—

" I.—That the brethren filling the office of Deacons in the Church be confirmed in their office, and that a suitable reinforcement of their numbers take place at the earliest convenience.

" II.—That a Committee consisting partly of Church Members and partly of seat-holders—not less than four of each to be chosen—the former by the Church, the latter by the seat-holders, for the present management of the place.

" III.—That presuming the above resolutions to be approved by the Church at Duke's Alley, the same be submitted to the former members of the Church present from the Town Hall congregation."

The resolutions were debated and practically adopted by both parties, with the result that a further special meeting of both parties of negotiators took place on March 9th, 1848, and the final outcome was the reunion of the friends from the Town Hall with the Church and Congregation assembling at Duke's Alley, which took place on the Sabbath day, March 26th, 1848.

Perhaps this general review of these troublesome times may be useful.

CHAPTER IX.

CONSOLIDATING THE WORK.

Rev. Benjamin Backhouse—Rev. William Hope Davison—His Call—Acceptance—Recognition Service—Where Duke's Alley Is.

At the close of the Ordinance of the Lord's Supper on the Sabbath of the 4th of February, 1849, the committee appointed to draw up the call to the Rev. Benjamin Backhouse, then of Rodborough, submitted a draft which was unanimously approved and adopted by the Church. We extract a few sections from this draft letter, as follows:—

“ It is now many months since we had the privilege of a stated Ministry. Several Ministers have supplied our pulpit during that period, but on none of these have our affections been unitedly fixed. Your visit amongst us has been with much acceptance, and your preaching has come to our hearts with power. We are unanimous in our opinion, and now unitedly and earnestly request that you will take the oversight of us in the Lord. We would cheerfully commit to your pastoral care our interests as a Church, earnestly imploring the blessing of the Great Head of the Church upon your labours amongst us.”

The letter is signed by Moses Scott, William Lee, Henry Macoun, and George Orrell, as Deacons, and Richard Booth, James Nicholson, James Lever, and Adam Ferguson as Members of the Church.

A Memorandum is inserted that the call and letter from the Committee to Mr. Backhouse was presented to him on Monday the 12th of February, 1849, at his lodgings in Bark Street, by the four Deacons and Adam Ferguson, the latter as the representative of the Committee.

A reply was read to the Church from the Rev. B. Backhouse, accepting the call, on February 21st, 1849, and he entered upon his pastoral duties on March 25th, 1849, being welcomed to the Pulpit by the congregation singing an appropriate hymn which was selected for the occasion. His ministry was a fairly successful one, and terminated on June 4th, 1851, when he administered the ordinance for the last time at Bolton. During his ministry the body of the Chapel was altered and fresh pews put in.

The appointment of the next minister, the Rev. W. Hope Davison, brings our record within the limits of memory.

This gentleman first visited Duke's Alley Chapel as a student from Cheshunt College, on March 21st, 1852, and his preaching was so acceptable that the following minute was entered in the book under date May 5th, 1852 :—

“ The Rev. Wm. Hope Davison, having for some time past supplied the Pulpit, and a strong feeling having been expressed towards him, a special meeting of the Church was called on Sabbath, May 30th, to receive the report of the deputation appointed to wait upon his tutor the Rev. Dr. Stowell. The deputation were Bros. Ferguson, Lever, and Orrell, who stated their conversation. The meeting was adjourned to Wednesday evening, June 2nd, 1852, when all were requested to come prepared to vote on the matter.”

This special meeting was held on the date named, and a decision to give a call to the Rev. William Hope Davison, to become the Pastor, was arrived at.

On June 10th, 1852, the draft of this call was submitted to a special meeting of the Church and is signed by Richard Booth, James Nicholson, and John B. Parkinson, as Deacons. Adam Ferguson, Ralph Reeve, James Lever, Alex. Mackie, as members. This was forwarded to Mr. Davison, and the following reply received :—

“ CHESHUNT COLLEGE, JUNE 22ND, 1852.

“ DEAR BRETHREN,—I have very anxiously and prayerfully considered the invitation you have so kindly given me to settle amongst you and to take the Pastoral oversight of you in the Lord. I have earnestly sought and hope I have received the guidance of the God of all wisdom in the decision to which I have come.

“ Believing as I do that our Lord Jesus Christ appoints those whom he employs as His Ministers in His Church, to those spheres in which he would have them move, I have endeavoured to gather from the various circumstances connected with my ministry amongst you, His will concerning my future position. I trust I have received that will. My decision is to accept at once your invitation to come amongst you, and to perform those functions which appertain to the Ministry of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. I depend upon the promised Grace of the Holy Spirit, whom he has sent for the purpose of enlightenment and helping those who put their trust in Him. Only let there be on your part, Brethren, a spirit of holy devotion—of right brotherly affection, of untiring zeal, of constant dependence upon God, of resistless energy concentrated in holy effort for the promotion of God's glory, and the favour of the most High shall bless our life and the smile of our Father shall sanctify our union. ‘ There shall be showers of blessing.’ May the Grace of God be enjoyed by you all! May the blessing of God make you glad! The grace of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ be with your spirits. Amen.

“ I am, my Dear Brethren,

“ Yours in Christian Affection,

“ WILLIAM HOPE DAVISON.”

How well this desired compact was carried out, we know and realise to the full in the light of present-day work and developments.

Mr. Davison commenced his stated labours at the close of the College Session, July 18th, 1852, and in accordance with the custom amongst us, the new pastor was ordained or dedicated by public service to his work on Wednesday, October 6th, 1852. The Rev. J. C. McMichael opened the service with reading and prayer. The Rev. G. W. Conder, of Leeds, gave the introductory discourse, and received the confession of Faith. The Rev. J. Dyson, of Farnworth, offered the Ordination Prayer, and the Rev. W. H. Stowell, D.D., of Cheshunt College, gave the charge to the minister. In the evening the sermon to the people was delivered by the Rev. J. Stoughton, of Kensington.

During his long and honoured pastorate in the town for nearly 22 years, the Congregational Church, St. George's Road, was built, mainly through his urgent advocacy and instrumentality, and the "church"—used in its congregational sense, as applying to the body of Christians worshipping there—removed to their newer and more convenient quarters, in April, 1863.

Very few people know or care to inform themselves where Duke's Alley is now. Up to 1880 the way into it was through a narrow entry, only three feet wide, running from Deansgate in a northerly direction fifty yards, when a tall building (now made into four cottages) on the easterly side is reached. This, we may safely conclude, was the original place of worship. On the east side of this building a stone tablet is inserted in the wall, inscribed:—

I.H.

This chapel was
Built in the year
1754.

The following is a copy of the lease of the land upon which Duke's Alley Chapel is built:—"From James Houghton yeoman of Bolton to John Bennett of Lee End in the parish of Glossop county of Derby yeoman yearly rent 27s. 20 yards by 24 $\frac{1}{2}$ yards Dated Sept. 8th 1753—999 years."

The site of the present Chapel and old School was formerly an orchard, and the Chapel was first erected on the east side

of the present site. The original foundation may be traced on passing from Ridgway Gates to Velvet Walks, several extensions having been made. When the Chapel was built on its present site, a chapel-house was also erected for the use of the minister, and afterwards occupied by the chapel-keeper.

The old Duke's Alley School was in 1822 entered from Chapel Alley, and had then undergone several additions and alterations, the last enlargement being in 1818. In 1840 the ground in Ridgway Gates was cleared of six or eight old cottages to form the site of the present school, and the square for the present entrance to the chapel. Many of the old seat-holders have left their mark in the old and venerated building. The large stove in the vestibule for heating the Chapel was supplied by the late Mr. Benjamin Hick, of the Soho Foundry ; the clock was supplied by the late Mr. James Mancor, watch-maker, of Bridge Street ; the brass mouldings round the clock and the sunlight were supplied by the late Mr. Thomas Parkinson, and the vestry furniture and the Communion table and chair by Mr. Milligan.

CHAPTER X.

The Rev. WILLIAM HOPE DAVISON.

Date of Birth—Start of Work—Called to Bolton—Ordination Services—St. George's Road Church Erected—Later Calls—Editor of the *Bolton Evening News*—Breakdown in Health—Resignation Letter—Parting Regrets—Valedictory Sermon—Educational Work—First Book—Hymn Book of Psalms and Hymns—Editorial Work—Removals to Chatham and Claremont—His Ability—Later Pastorates—Death—Memorial Tablet.

The gentleman we have now to consider was born at Sunderland on November 27th, 1827, and baptised by the Rev. Joseph Stratton, Pastor of Bethel Chapel, on the 23rd December of the same year. After leaving school, he became a compositor in the office of the *Sunderland Times*.

About the age of fifteen, he joined the Church in Villiers Street, and even then manifested a decided talent for preaching, his services being much sought after in the mining villages of Durham and Northumberland. Under the influence of the

late Dr. McAll, afterwards of Paris, he began to study for the ministry, and by his advice took a preparatory course at Fakenham, subsequently obtaining admission to Cheshunt College, where his studies were interrupted at least once by serious illness.

The illustration shows a characteristic pose adopted by the reverend gentleman when addressing his Bible Class.

For some months the Church was without a settled Pastor, and it is not till May 5th, 1852, that we find any further reference towards the settlement of another one.

On Wednesday evening, June 2nd, 1852, at a special Church Meeting, a resolution was recorded in the books "that this Church give a call to the Rev. Wm. Hope Davison, now a student in Cheshunt College, to become the Pastor." This was carried, and approved, and confirmed on June 6th, 1852.

On the Sabbath day, July 18th, 1852, Mr. Davison commenced his ministry, and the hope was expressed : " May he remain the happy minister to a happy people for many, many years, and at last receive the faithful pastor's rich reward."

The ordination services took place in the following October, and then commenced a lengthened and very fruitful ministry; imbued with a sense of the importance of his mission, he set to work with a determination which proved to be his leading characteristic in his many years of labour in the town. The Church was weak, there were only eighty members on the books when he started work here, and the whole of the money he received during the first year was £139, out of which he had to provide all "supplies."

Ten years after he had settled here, Mr. Davison and his Congregation undertook the erection of a new Church, to which they subsequently removed. This Church is now celebrating the jubilee of its erection fifty years ago, and St. George's Road Congregational Church will ever stand as a beautiful edifice to commemorate as a memorial his earnest work and labours in this town.

Successful as was his work in the centre of the Borough, Mr. Davison was not content, and was continually reaching out for other spheres of influence. He saw that other neighbourhoods required the Gospel, and he initiated an extension



The late REV. WILLIAM HOPE DAVISON.

movement, which resulted in the establishment of Churches at Derby Street, Blackburn Road and Tyldesley, all of which are now flourishing centres of influence with schools attached thereto.

In 1860 he produced his first Hymn Book for use in the Churches, and from 1862 to 1865 acted as the Honorary Secretary of the Bolton Poor Protection Society, for which service he was presented with a silver salver and richly-mounted purse, containing 130 guineas, by subscribers to this fund.

In 1862 the foundation stone of St. George's Road was laid, and the Church opened in 1863. The cause here got nicely established, and during 1866 he received calls to Grosvenor Street, Manchester; Crescent Church, Liverpool; Paul's Meeting, Taunton; and in 1869 to Falcon Square, London. The call to Taunton was repeated in 1867, and at the earnest wish of his people he declined. He was suffering a great deal from bronchitis about this time, and went to Paris for a throat operation, which restored his capacity to labour. He also acted as first Editor of the *Bolton Evening News* in 1867, an office he retained until 1871. Many sermons, pamphlets, and other papers were written by him.

After preaching at Hope Chapel, Oldham, in the summer of 1871, he again broke down seriously in health, and about this time was presented with £1,200 by various Bolton gentlemen of all parties. He was incapacitated from labour for fifteen months, and early in the following year visited France and Germany, but his illness so affected his general health that he decided to leave Bolton in 1873, and take a charge at Chatham, where it was thought the warmer climate would suit him better. He therefore handed in his resignation on September 10th, 1873. The Rev. William Hope Davison thus resigned his charge here, and the following letter was addressed to the Church and Congregation :—

“ I beg hereby to tender my Resignation of the Pastorate of the Church and Congregation, to which I was freely and heartily called nearly twenty-two years ago. Events which have occurred since my return to my duties have convinced me that I cannot enjoy that amount of quiet and of harmonious co-operation which my state of health imperatively demands ; and I have been pained to hear repeatedly of complaints that I do not undertake duties of a public character—outside the Congregation—to which I am not drawn either by inclination or a sense of personal duty ; and for which, it is well known, I

have no strength. The assistance which the Church kindly and unanimously decided should be rendered to me in the visitation of the Congregation—to meet my desire to secure greater regularity and efficiency in that part of the work—was withdrawn ; and during recent recurring attacks of illness, that work has been necessarily left, to a considerable extent, undone, to my great sorrow.

“ After the long and arduous labours and sacrifices of a Pastorate, which, with all its failures and shortcomings, has been so greatly blessed of God in the very large increase of the Church and Congregation—the building of the new Church and Schools—and the wider diffusion and influence of the true principles of Nonconformity in the town and neighbourhood ; and considering my close and tender association with my people, in family and personal sorrow especially, during so many years, it may easily be believed that I have not reached the conclusion that it is my duty to retire from the Pastorate without much painful anxiety and regret. To leave those true and faithful friends who have stood by me so nobly through all the conflicts and labours, and amid all the, sometimes virulent, oppositions and persecutions of the past, and who have supported me with a loving confidence as rare in the history of Bolton Nonconformity as it has been honourable to the givers and grateful to the recipient, is the most painful event of my life.

“ May God abundantly bless them and their children with all heavenly blessings in Christ Jesus ! May all meet at length where the broken bonds of earth are re-united and loving hearts are parted no more for ever.

“ In all faithful love,

“ WILLIAM HOPE DAVISON.”

“ SEPTEMBER 10TH, 1873.”

At the Special General Meeting arranged to receive the Pastor’s letter of Resignation, the following resolution was passed :—

“ That inasmuch as the Letter of our Pastor now read, appears to have been penned under a misapprehension of the true state of feeling entertained for him by the Members of this Church and Congregation, this meeting regards this as a fitting opportunity for expressing, and hereby expresses, its undiminished confidence in Mr. Davison as Pastor of this Church, and with a view to the reconsideration of his contemplated resignation, hereby decides not to vote upon the question until the following gentlemen have waited upon him to lay before him the resolution come to at this meeting.”

Messrs. James Smethurst, Benjamin Cole, A. Ferguson, H. Webster, James Lever, Henry Bowman, William Robinson, and Thomas Johnson, were the gentlemen appointed.

On September 11th, the deputation met Mr. Davison in the vestry and laid before him the resolution passed at the meeting. It was decided (at the request of Mr. Davison), to call a meeting of the General Committee, with a view to the withdrawal of a letter sent by that Committee to Mr. Davison.

This request was acceded to, but on September 15th, Mr. Ferguson laid before another special meeting a communication he had received from Mr. Davison, in which he declines to continue his ministry, saying :—

“ There is no alternative, as far as I can see, and I must adhere to my resignation as presented to the Church on Wednesday evening last. Assure the people of my undiminished affection and my regret that I feel compelled to leave those to whom I am bound by so many sacred ties. I shall close my Ministry on Sunday the 28th inst.”

This letter was received with regret, and the Members of the Church and Congregation then present, having heard the report of the deputation appointed to wait upon and confer with Mr. Davison, and understanding from the said report that he adheres to his resignation as already presented to the Church, resolve, “ that no other course seems open to them but to accept the same. In doing so, however, they now desire the Deacons to convey to the Rev. W. H. Davison an expression of the deep sorrow they feel in parting with him, and an assurance of their sincere affection for him personally, with their earnest prayers for the future welfare, prosperity, and happiness of himself and family.”

On September 28th, 1873, Mr. Davison preached morning and evening, and these services terminated his labours as the Pastor of St. George’s Road Congregational Church. He laboured in Bolton nearly twenty-two years.

In his valedictory sermon he observed that they had raised within ten years over £16,000, and the Church had increased threefold. There had been received to Communion more than 660 members. The income was larger than ever, and was increasing. There were about 600 day scholars and 800 Sunday scholars.

His preaching had been effective as well as brilliant, and warmly evangelical. His delivery was both tender and intensely energetic, and his reading of the Scriptures was greatly admired. He was singularly gifted with the power of prayer and able to move the devotional feelings of his congregation most profoundly. Many of his best sermons appear in the volumes of *The Preacher’s Monthly*.

In educational matters he always displayed great interest. He often addressed the old Mechanics’ Institution *Essay* and

Discussion Class, and in November, 1870, took part in a meeting called for the formation of the School Board. He was also a member of the Executive Committee of the Bolton Branch of the Education League. He was a gifted writer, and will perhaps be best remembered in this way as the first editor of the *Bolton Evening News*.

His first book was "Centenary Memorials of Duke's Alley Chapel," published in 1854 by John Tillotson.

Shortly afterwards he undertook the production of a hymn book—"Psalms and Hymns for Public Worship," which was used until a few years ago by the Church in Bolton of which he was pastor. Some of the hymns he wrote have found their way into many hymnals, especially those arranged for children. The hymn, "Jesus, King of Glory, throned above the sky," has been sung at numerous Sunday School Anniversaries.

He also contributed to several leading religious journals, and for some time was editor and publisher of *The Preacher's Monthly*. He was also acting editor of *The Christian Age*, and assistant editor of the *Congregational Magazine*. He was a well-known figure in Fleet Street, and his hand might often be traced in the columns of the *Echo*.

His health sadly interfered with his later usefulness and the promise which he gave here was hardly fulfilled later. He was very successful at Chatham and afterwards at Claremont Chapel, Pentonville, but it can hardly be said with justice that at either place he rose to the high level of his Lancashire reputation.

Everywhere his ability was confessed, even by those who differed from him. He held decided opinions, and did not hesitate to express them, sometimes with more force than wisdom. He often took such a severe view of men as to misunderstand them, and thus to be misunderstood by them. A man of ardent temper, of a fearless courage, of bold and enterprising spirit, very impatient of all sham, he was sure to raise up enemies. But even his keenest opponents recognised his power and were impressed by his manly straightforwardness. He was a bright, brotherly soul, full of geniality, generous in disposition, nervous in temperament, quick in the exhibition of feeling, cherishing strong likes and dislikes, liable to excite-

ment, now and again to impetuous action, but always governed by a noble conception of his office and work, and by high ideals of Christian character and its responsibilities.

In 1884 he resigned at Claremont, and declined a call to Northampton. His first wife died in March, 1884. In 1886 he was married for a second time, and occupied the Pastorate at Newport, Isle of Wight, and in 1888 or 1889 again removed to Streatham, London, where he remained until 1891 or 1892, when he removed to Plymouth. The last two years of his life were spent in comparative retirement at Plymouth, where it was hoped the genial climate would suit the throat affection from which he had suffered so severely in the north. In the month of May, 1894, however, he was overtaken by a stroke of paralysis, which was succeeded three months later by an apoplectic seizure. After three days of unconsciousness he passed away peacefully on Saturday morning, August 25th, 1894, in the sixty-seventh year of his age. The interment took place in Plymouth Cemetery, the event being marked by manifestations of sympathy on the part of the Congregationalists of the town, by whom he was held in high respect.

Information having been received here of his death, the secretary was instructed to write to his son the Rev. W. H. Davison, and express to him the deep sympathy of the Deacons to him and his family in their bereavement.

A similar resolution was also submitted to the Church Meeting and passed by them, and finally a tablet was erected in the Church to his memory which bears the following inscription : " In Loving Memory of the Rev. W. H. Davison, the beloved Pastor of this Church from 1852 to 1873 ; an eloquent Preacher, and in labour abundant. This building was erected mainly through his untiring energy. Born, 1827 ; died, 1894."

CHAPTER XI. CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS.

Centenary Sermons—Sunday School Canvass—New Chapel Projected
—Details of Scheme Proposed.

In November, 1854, the Centenary of the Chapel was celebrated, the Centenary Sermons being preached on Sunday, November 5th, 1854, by the Rev. R. Vaughan, D.D., of the Lancashire Independent College ; and on the Tuesday evening following by the Rev. Thomas Raffles, D.D., LL.D., of Liverpool. On the Wednesday evening, nearly 800 persons attended a public tea meeting, which was held in the Temperance Hall. Thomas Barnes, Esq., M.P., took the chair, and after a portion of the history to that time had been read, eloquent and powerful addresses were delivered by the Revs. H. W. Parkinson, of Rochdale ; R. Slade, of Preston ; J. Dyson, of Farnworth ; J. R. Jones, R. Best, and J. J. Owen, of Bolton, and other friends.

On Thursday, the 9th of November, the scholars of the Sunday School, to the number of 350 or more, were treated with a Tea Party in the schoolroom, after which they were addressed by the Rev. W. Hope Davison, the Superintendent, and Mr. David Grey. All the services were well attended, and great enthusiasm prevailed.

In view of these services it was determined to pay off the remainder of the debt which was contracted in 1840, and to raise a fund for making some slight alterations in the Chapel and Schools. The entire sum raised for this purpose was £473 16s. 6d. In addition to this sum, £20 was given by the ladies for a public tea meeting, and for the entertainment of the scholars belonging to the schools.

All the services were deeply interesting, and it was a great time. The Pastor and his people were much cheered and encouraged by the attendance of persons connected with all the congregations which had sprung out of the Duke's Alley Chapel, and of many belonging to other denominations.

How many precious souls have been born of God within the walls of Duke's Alley Chapel ! How many children have

been trained in truth and righteousness in the Schools there established and supported ! How many new centres of influence and enlightenment created by the efforts of those connected with it ! How abundant has been the liberality of its people, whose contributions alone must be numbered by many thousands ! We to-day carry forward the work. Let us hope the fruits of our labours will be as abundantly blessed as in the past.

A general Sunday School Canvass was carried out in the year 1856, as is recorded in a Minute dated June 15th, 1856 :—

“ At a meeting of Sunday School Teachers, held in the Town Hall, Little Bolton, on Tuesday evening the 10th of June, Mr. Adam Ferguson being in the chair, it was unanimously resolved ‘ that the present state of thousands of the juvenile population of this Borough calls for some special efforts to bring them under the discipline and teaching of Sabbath Schools. This meeting is of opinion that the best mode of accomplishing this object is to institute a thorough canvass of the entire town, and to adopt such means as may be necessary for its fullest realization.’ ”

To carry out this resolution a committee was appointed with power to add to its numbers, and the number of schools represented was 18 ; one person from each school constituted the sub-committee to work the scheme.

An alteration to the Chapel took place in July, 1858. This affected the interior by altering the arrangement of the pews so that both sides were made alike and so gave the effect of a more uniform appearance generally.

The record of the transactions of the year 1859 would not be complete without a special reference to two events of a most important character.

The first being the decision of the Church and Congregation to meet the demand for seats in the Chapel, and to do something towards the evangelisation of the town by attempting the erection of a new Chapel and Schools in some other part of the town, as recorded in the resolution of February 8th, 1859 :—

“ FEBRUARY 8TH, 1859—Moved by Mr. Manchester, and seconded by Mr. Bell, ‘ that in the opinion of this meeting it is desirable, in the circumstances of the congregation, and in view of the religious destitution of the town, to erect a new Chapel in some other locality.’ Moved by Mr. Grey and seconded by Mr. W. F. Tillotson, ‘ that Mr. Davison, Mr. J. Lever, Mr. Bell, and Mr. Johnson, be empowered to draw up a statement of the facts referred to in the above resolution, and to place it before the Congregation next Sunday.’ ”

“ FINANCE COMMITTEE RESOLUTION.”

A sub-committee was chosen to devise a scheme for securing the erection of a new chapel, and they agreed upon one which was accepted by the majority of the congregation on the basis of a division of the congregation—one part to remain at Duke's Alley and the other to form the new and separate church. Subsequently a number withheld their contributions on the ground that a similar division in the town had previously failed.

The second, the growing seriousness and awakening of many members of the Congregation, and the deep spiritual anxiety of the young people in the Schools.

Towards the end of the year the Pastor had upwards of 80 persons on his list of enquirers, and the labour had become so oppressive that he was obliged to seek assistance. This he found in the Rev. C. G. Finney and his Lady, who laboured with him and then with other brethren in the Temperance Hall for some months, with very marked success, as Missioner.

In reference to the former scheme, a special Meeting of the Church and Congregation, held in the Schoolroom on Tuesday evening, February 15th, 1859, at half-past seven o'clock, the Pastor in the chair, it was unanimously resolved :—

“ I.—That in the opinion of this meeting, it is desirable, in the circumstances of the Congregation, and in view of the religious destitution of the town, to erect a new Chapel in some other and suitable locality.

“ II.—That a sub-committee be now appointed to consider the practicability of this proposal, and devise a scheme for carrying it into effect, who shall report to an adjourned meeting of the Church and Congregation, to be held on Tuesday evening, February 22nd, 1859.”

The following was the report presented at the adjourned meeting :—

“ Your committee assembled in the vestry on Thursday evening last. There were present the Pastor, Messrs. George Bell, James Lever, John Manchester, David Grey, W. F. Tillotson, Joseph Bradshaw, Thomas Hood, Henry Macoun, Rd. Cunliffe, Joseph Taylor, and Joseph Ormrod. Having carefully considered the subject, your committee, deeming the practicability of the proposal a matter for experiment rather than debate, unanimously resolved to recommend the following course to the adoption of the Church and Congregation :—

“ I.—That the movement be Congregational; and that no effort be spared to induce the people, unitedly, to take part in it. Your committee would deeply deplore anything like a division of feeling in reference to a movement so important and necessary, as tending to retard the progress of true religion

and to disgrace our denomination in the eyes of other and neighbouring churches ; and they fervently trust that everything like sectional action may be avoided.

“ II.—That in case this movement be successful, and a new Chapel erected, Duke’s Alley Chapel and School be left as they are, for the use of such members of the Church and Congregation as choose rather to remain to worship and engage in efforts of Christian usefulness in that locality ; that when the new Chapel is opened, it be left to the free and unbiassed decision of the individuals in which place they will worship ; and that no effort be put forth, either on the one hand or the other, to induce persons to leave the present Chapel or stay.

“ III.—That an additional and separate Church be formed in the new Chapel as soon as possible after it is opened for public worship—the relations between such Church and that in Duke’s Alley being simply those which subsist between other Independent Churches. But your committee trust that nothing will ever arise to cause a diminution of interest in the prosperity of Duke’s Alley Chapel on the part of those who become members of the New Church, and that the sympathies and prayers of those who remain at Duke’s Alley will ever attend their brethren, who, in their name, go forth to aid this endeavour to extend Christ’s kingdom and the principles of our common Congregationalism.

“ IV.—That an attempt be made to raise a sum of not less than £5,000.

“ V.—That in order to secure this, a subscription be paid weekly, monthly, quarterly, or yearly instalments, extending over a period of three years, or in one sum, at the option of the subscribers.

“ VI.—That collectors be appointed to canvass the congregation and receive their subscriptions.

“ VII.—That a General Committee be appointed at this meeting to carry out the proposed design.

“ VIII.—That no arrangement be entered into by them, except one that will secure the opening of the New Chapel free of debt.”

The following resolution was then unanimously passed : “ That the Report now read be received and adopted, and that it be printed and circulated among the members of the Church and Congregation.” The Committee was also nominated and appointed.

CHAPTER XII.

ST. GEORGE'S ROAD CHAPEL PROJECTED.

Preparations for Removal—Schemes Considered—Opposition Met With—Resolution to Build Approved—Children’s Procession.

The necessity for a new Chapel and School being more than ever felt, it was suggested by the Pastor at the Tea

Party of the Church and Congregation, which was held in the Temperance Hall on January 3rd, 1861, that an endeavour should be made to secure a new place without the necessity of dividing the congregation. The meeting at once embraced the proposal, and a committee consisting of the Deacons and leading members of the Church and Congregation was requested to consider and report upon this proposal as early as possible. The matter was further considered at a special Meeting held in the Church on February 26th, 1861, and their report read. This reads: "A scheme was explained by which it was proposed to secure the additional Chapel accommodation rendered necessary by the increase of the congregation and the continued applications for pews on the part of strangers who desire to worship with us.

" The Schoolrooms are also required for a greatly enlarged effort on behalf of the young connected with us and in our immediate neighbourhood without the necessity of dividing the congregation and thus weakening ourselves in any respect. This scheme, meeting as it did with the unanimous approval of that assembly and of most of those in the congregation who had not subscribed to an additional Chapel to be built in another part of the town, your Committee took into their most serious consideration, and after long and careful investigation, unanimously agreed to it as the basis of their future operations and decided to recommend for adoption by this meeting the following resolution, viz.:

" 'That we remain one Congregation in a greatly enlarged Chapel.'

" Your Committee then entered upon the various labours requisite to prepare a practical plan to be considered by the Congregation, and, if approved by this meeting, adopted. Their first efforts were in the direction of an enlargement of the present Chapel by the purchase of property lying on either side of it. In reference to that on the lower or river side of it, they found that if purchased it must be used mainly for a street, the Corporation requiring one to be made for the benefit mainly of the houses in Velvet Walks.

" In reference to that on the south or Deansgate side, they found some difficulties in the way as to a legal right to sell, and consequently came to the conclusion—very reluctantly—

that this plan was hardly practicable at the present time. They next directed their attention to a plan for erecting a new Chapel on the site of the present school, and the adjoining houses, designing to use the present Chapel for week evening services and schools. On making application to the proprietors of the adjoining property they found a readiness to sell, and though a somewhat extravagant price was demanded for the two houses immediately adjoining the School, they, after careful consideration of the matter, agreed unanimously to recommend that site for adoption by the Congregation. No difficulty of any sort stood in the way of this scheme.

“ A block plan of a proposed building was submitted to the Town Surveyor and Streets Committee. This plan was approved by them with the exception of a proposal which your Committee made to divide the five feet of land now taken up by steps and areas, they taking the one part and the town the other for a flagged footpath. This Chapel would have been in the whole, without the additional width the Committee endeavoured to secure, 49 feet wide by about 100 feet long, and there would have been space for a large room 46 feet by 46 feet at the lower end, suitable for a day school. Altogether it would have been a great improvement upon our present position and worthy of the character of our body in the town.

“ Having thus found, step by step, the practicability of this plan, your committee deemed it right to lay it before the only surviving Trustee of the present Chapel, that no difficulty might arise in reference to the use of the old Chapel as a school. A deputation consisting of Messrs. Adam Ferguson, George Bell, and James Lever, was therefore appointed to wait upon him, and in a friendly spirit to lay before him the scheme which had thus been carefully elaborated. To the surprise of your Committee, however, he refused to receive such deputation, and announced his determination to prevent, if it were in his power, either an enlargement of the present Chapel or its use as a Sunday School as proposed; and, moreover, refused to fulfil the engagement he made when accepting the Trust to appoint fresh Trustees according to the requirements of the Deed. Your Committee at once considered what steps should be taken in reference to such an attempt to subvert the Constitution of this Congregation as

belonging to the Independent or Congregational persuasion, the fundamental principle of which is the right of the Congregation to determine and decide upon all matters affecting its welfare by a vote of the majority. They found, however, that to remove Mr. Gregson from the Trust, to appoint new Trustees, and to carry out the scheme contemplated, application would have to be made to the Charity Commissioners and other legal steps taken. To prevent the scandal which must necessarily have arisen from a legal conflict, they ultimately resolved, though very reluctantly, to abandon their scheme and propose the following motion : ' That this Committee, in view of the decided and unreasonable opposition of Mr. Gregson, the only surviving Trustee of the present Chapel, agree to recommend the Congregation to commence a new interest and to build for itself a new Chapel and Schools in some other part of the town.'

" Resolutions in accordance with this scheme will now be submitted, and the Committee earnestly trust that if approved, the Congregation will soon be located in a new home—all its own—free of debt, in a position worthy of itself and of the sacred principles which it believes and venerates. It was then moved by Mr. Lever and seconded by Mr. Bell, and supported by Messrs. Ferguson, Higginbottom, Bradshaw, Ormrod, and others, ' that the report now read be received and adopted, and that under the Divine Blessing a new Chapel and Schools be erected for the use of this Congregation in some other part of the town.' This was carried unanimously, and was followed by another resolution, moved by Mr. Bradshaw and seconded by Mr. Ormrod, ' that a General Committee be now appointed to select a site, to procure plans and estimates, to secure the requisite subscriptions, so that the works may be proceeded with without delay, and that the Committee consist of the Pastor and male subscribers to the fund, being members of the Congregation.' This motion met with general acceptance."

At the Church Meeting, held April 2nd, 1861, a further resolution, " that a New School in connection with this Church be established as soon as a suitable building can be obtained, and that the Pastor and his Council, together with the Officers and Male Teachers of the School be a Committee to form the

new School ; and that the above, together with the Teachers of the new School, be a Committee to manage both Schools under the direct influence of the Church, reporting to it time after time," was carried.

At a Teachers' Meeting, held on the 13th of April, 1862, the question of what should be done with the children of the schools on the day of the laying of the corner stone of the new Chapel at St. George's Road was discussed, and a procession of scholars to the site arranged for. After this they were to proceed to Lark Street School, and each received a bun on passing through the School.

CHAPTER XIII.

ST. GEORGE'S ROAD CHAPEL ERECTED.

Copy of Trust Deed—List of Trustees Appointed—Claim to be the First Congregational Congregation in Bolton—Census of 1851-61—Subscriptions to Building Fund—Laying the Corner Stone—Celebrations Connected Therewith—Description of Church Built.

The story of the establishment of St. George's Road Congregational Church opens with the record of a meeting, at which a resolution to build was passed, the particulars of which are cited in the Trust Deed of the Church, as follows :—

" Whereas a congregation of Protestant Dissenters of the Congregational Denomination, commonly called Independents, being Pedobaptists, meeting for divine worship in the meeting house situate in Duke's Alley Chapel, of which the said William Hope Davison is the Minister, having agreed by Resolution unanimously passed at a meeting of the said Congregation held in the Schoolroom at Ridgway Gates in Bolton aforesaid, on Tuesday, the fifteenth day of February, one thousand eight hundred and fifty-nine, to erect a new Church and School in some other locality, requested the said James Lever, George Bell, Ralph Almond, William Hope Davison, and Richard Shaw, to form themselves into a building committee, to obtain a lease of the land comprised in the firstly hereinbefore recited Indenture for such purpose."

When the choice of land and the site of the Church was finally decided upon, the following gentlemen agreed to act as the original Trustees for the same as is shown in a further citation, as follows :—

" This Indenture made August 15th, 1863, between James Lever, Grocer ; George Bell, Engineer ; Ralph Almond, Timber

Merchant ; William Hope Davison, Minister of the Gospel ; and Richard Shaw, Draper ; all of Bolton in the County of Lancaster of the first part. (The Building Committee.) The said William Hope Davison of the second part, and Thomas Barnes of the Quinta, in the County of Salop, Esquire, Member of Parliament. The said George Bell and James Lever, Joseph Bradshaw, Flour Dealer ; John Manchester, Butcher. The said Ralph Almond ; William Milligan, Superintendent of the Scavenging Department for the Corporation of Bolton ; William Bradley, Furniture Broker ; John Horrocks, Book-keeper ; Richard Hamer, Grocer ; Charles Gregory, Dresser ; William Heywood, Joiner ; Thomas Proudlove, Warehouseman ; Joseph Ormrod, Flour Dealer ; James Baythorp, Smith ; Thomas Hood, Flour Dealer ; Richard Cunliffe, Engineer ; Joseph Lowe, Grocer ; William Warbrick, Tailor ; Miles Buck, Tool Maker ; Charles Rothwell, Surgeon ; Joseph Russell, Ironmonger ; Benjamin Cole, Draper ; all of Bolton aforesaid. Thomas Howarth, Gentleman ; Henry Webster, Engineer ; Joseph Taylor, Clerk ; all of Haulgh in the said County. John Bromiley Book-keeper ; and Peter Ormrod, Warehouseman, both of Halliwell of the third part."

Peter Ainsworth, of Smithills Hall, was the original owner of the land on which the Church now stands, and it was conveyed by him to the above Trustees for a term of 5,000 years at a ground rent of £46 4s. 4d. At the same time a mortgage of £800 was executed to Joseph Bradshaw, and an Indenture of Lease of part of the land to Joseph Marsden, the builder, which was not required at that time for building purposes, was executed at a ground rent of £24 12s. 11d., on June 3rd, 1863.

After the Church and School were erected, the Building Committee transferred the lease to the Trustees appointed. The date of the first lease of the land obtained is the first of May, 1861. The Trustees appointed accepted charge upon Trusts dated June 3rd, 1863, which regulate the Use of the Premises, Gifts and Bequests, Incidental Funds, Choice of Pastor, Doctrine, Pulpit Supplies, Powers and Conditions on which money may be raised, Mortgage and Sale, Protection of Trustees, Disqualification of Trustees, Power of the Majority of Trustees, Retiring Trustees, Calling of Meeting of Congregation, Persons entitled to vote at Special Meetings, Government vested in the Church Members, and finally, the Powers of the Trustees to sell and pay Mortgage.

The following is the list of Trustees registered as being appointed on August 1st, 1863, under the Rev. W. H. Davison, as Pastor :—



INTERIOR—ST. GEORGE'S ROAD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

RALPH ALMOND.
 THOMAS BARNES, M.P.
 JAMES BAYTHORP.
 GEORGE BELL.
 WILLIAM BRADLEY.
 JOSEPH BRADSHAW.
 JOHN BROMILEY.
 MICHAEL BUCK.
 BENJAMIN COLE.
 RICHARD CUNLIFFE.
 CHARLES GREGORY.
 RICHARD HAMER.
 WILLIAM HEYWOOD.
 THOMAS HOOD.
 JOHN HORROCKS.

THOMAS HOWARTH.
 JAMES LEVER.
 JOSEPH LOWE.
 JOHN MANCHESTER.
 WILLIAM MILLIGAN.
 JOSEPH ORMROD.
 PETER ORMROD.
 THOMAS PROUDLOVE.
 CHARLES ROTHWELL.
 WILLIAM WARBRICK.
 HENRY WEBSTER.
 JOSEPH TAYLOR.
 RICHARD SHAW.
 JOSEPH RUSSELL.

The large and influential body of Christians who now worship in the Congregational Church, St. George's Road, can lay claim to a long and honourable history. The Church—which term we use in its real congregational meaning, applying to worshippers and not the building in which they assemble—can claim to be the first Congregational Independent Congregation ever formed in Bolton, dating from the 3rd of April, 1752, being composed of 107 members of the Society formed by the Rev. John Bennet, who founded the first Church at Duke's Alley, which was opened for divine worship in 1754, and whose history is traced out in the first part of the work. The Rev. W. Hope Davison was ordained the Pastor of this place in 1854, and during the first few years of this gentleman's ministrations the number of communicants—a sure test of a church's growth or decline—increased from 80 to 250, and for some time previous to 1862 there were no sittings for persons desirous of joining the congregation. Under these circumstances the Rev. W. H. Davison made an earnest appeal to members of his own Church. He pointed out the duty which presented itself with overwhelming power of making an effort to erect an additional place of worship and schools in the town, especially when the actual deficiency of the accommodation for religious worship in Bolton was considered.

From the census of 1851 it appeared that the inhabitants numbered 61,171. The number of sittings in churches and chapels of all denominations ought to be 58 per cent. of the whole population. The actual provision existing in that year was only 35.6 per cent., the deficiency of sittings in churches and chapels being 13,678 or 22.4 per cent. Since 1851 to the time of making the appeal (1861) the population

had been increasing at the average rate of 1505 per annum, so that the number of inhabitants was then about 74,716. The religious accommodation needed for such a number was about 43,350 sittings, and that actually provided was about 21,800 sittings, leaving a deficiency to be supplied of 21,550 sittings, or nearly 29 per cent. of the whole population.

The members and congregation set to work with a will to obtain contributions towards the object they had in hand. From an old subscription book we find the following :— Thomas Barnes, Esq., M.P., £500, Mr. George Bell, £200, Mr. J. Lever, £150, Mr. Higginbotham, £110, Mrs. Blackburn, mother of Jos. Mellor, Esq., £110, Peter Martin, Esq., £100, Thomas Cullen, Esq., £100, George Hadfield, Esq., M.P., £100, Mr. and Mrs. Manchester, £100, Mr. Rothwell, £100, Mr. Gregson, £100, Mr. W. F. Tillotson, £100, Mr. R. Almond, £100, Mr. A. Ferguson, £100, the Rev. W. H. Davison, £50, Mr. J. Bradshaw, £50, Mr. R. Shaw, £50, Mr. James Barlow, £50, Mr. G. Henry, £50, Mr. James Nicholson, £50, Mr. Thomas Johnson, £50, Mr. Crompton Hulme, £50, Mr. Haywood's Class, £40, Mr. David Grey, £35, Mr. Bradshaw's Class, £30, Mr. Henry Lever, £30, Mr. John Hulton, £30, Mr. W. Cunliffe, £25, Mr. R. S. Ashton, £25, Mr. Eccles Shorrock, £25, Mr. J. W. Whittaker, £25, Mr. Thomas Howarth, £25, Mr. John Hick, £25, Mr. G. Orrell, £21, Mr. Thomas Hood, £20, Mr. A. Muir, £20, Mr. Joseph Ormrod, £20, Miss Ainsworth, £20, Mrs. Almond, £20, Mr. J. Cunliffe, £20, Mr. Baythorp, £20, Mr. J. Shorrock, £20, Mr. W. McAllen, £20, Mr. Joseph Lowe, £20, Mr. J. R. Wolfenden, £20, Mr. J. Spencer, £20, Mr. Hy. Macoun, £15, and Mr. William Milligan, £15.

The sums promised in this list were, however, largely increased, many members of the congregation giving double or treble the amount standing against their names. In many cases the increase was even larger; and in addition to these there were numerous donations of smaller amounts. Land was obtained at the junction of St. George's Road and Bath Street for the new edifice, and on Good Friday (April 18th), 1862, the Bi-Centenary Year of the Ejection of the Two Thousand Ministers—the birth of Nonconformity—the corner stone of the new building was laid in the presence of a vast concourse of spectators by Thomas Barnes, Esq., M.P., who has always,

along with the Crossleys of Halifax, Samuel Morley, Geo. Hadfield, and others, appeared as one of the great leaders of Congregationalism.

The company assembled in Duke's Alley Chapel and marched in procession to the site. The Rev. W. H. Davison, the Pastor, was accompanied by the Mayor of Bolton (Ald. J. R. Wolfenden), the Rev. R. Best, the Rev. Enoch Mellor, D.D., the Rev. G. D. MacGregor, Farnworth; the Rev. W. Roseman, Bury; the Rev. A. Ward (Wesleyan), the Rev. T. Cain, Farnworth; the Rev. Eli Pickford, Little Lever; and the Rev. W. Fell, of the Lancashire Independent College, whilst among the members of the Church and Congregation were Mr. James Lever, Mr. Adam Ferguson, Messrs. J. Higginbotham, J. Tillotson, J. Bradshaw, George Bell, Henry Webster, John Knowles, R. Hamer, James Nicholson, George Orrell, J. B. Parkinson, J. Horrocks, and others. After the singing of the well-known hymn "Thou who hast in Zion laid the true foundation stone," Mr. James Lever then deposited in the cavity of the stone a bottle, containing, amongst other articles, a statement as cited later.

The foundation stone was then laid by Thomas Barnes, Esq., M.P., and the silver trowel used was presented to Mr. Barnes by Mr. Adam Ferguson, and the ceremony was performed with appropriate solemnity, though the proceedings were necessarily somewhat curtailed through a persistent downpour of rain. The Rev. Dr. Mellor afterwards delivered an address in Duke's Alley Chapel, and at a tea meeting subsequently held, Mr. Barnes was the principal speaker, comparing the position of Nonconformity at that time with what it was two hundred years before when the two thousand ministers left the Church for conscience sake. Twelve months afterwards, namely, on April 3rd, 1863, the new Church was opened, the Rev. W. H. Davison having on the previous Sunday evening preached in the Hall beneath the Church. Masterly discourses were delivered at the opening by the Rev. Dr. Allon, of Islington, and others. Mr. Crompton Hulme presented the linoleum for the entrance and the cocoanut matting for the aisles. Mrs. Lever and her family presented the Pulpit Bible and Hymn Book. Another suitable gift was the presentation of a handsome set of pulpit

robes to Mr. Davison by the ladies of the congregation.

The structure, the architects of which were Messrs. Oliver and Lamb, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and the contractor, Mr. Joseph Marsden, of this town, is entirely of stone, has a handsome and commanding appearance, the site being well adapted to set off an attractive building, the tower and spire being placed at the junction of St. George's Road and Knowsley Street. The spire is of elegant proportions, and an object of attraction in this part of the town, being called Mr. Davison's toothpick at this time. The style of architecture is Gothic. On the basement floor are large school-rooms, class-rooms, &c., and above these is the Church with the vestries behind. The Church will seat twelve hundred persons. Galleries run round the entire building, that behind the pulpit being for the choir. The exterior fronting into Bath Street has a large centre gable, in which is a fine seven-light window, pierced with elaborate geometric tracery. The doorways in the tower and porch are large, deeply recessed, and richly carved ; and the whole of the pinnacles, tower buttresses, junction of tower with spire, and all label and other terminations are also appropriately and artistically carved. In the erection utility was embodied with elegance, and the acoustic properties of the church are considered admirable.

Internally the Church is divided into nave and aisles by iron columns, which go up to and support the roof and nave arches. The whole of the woodwork is stained and varnished. The roof shows a waggon-headed ceiling of plaster work, formed into various-sized panels by the principals and purlins. The Church is warmed by means of hot-air apparatus. The total cost, with some alterations which were found to be necessary in the Hall, was close upon £9,000. A debt of over £2,200 remained after the opening services. A portion of this was met by yearly subscriptions. It was at length resolved to wipe off the remainder, amounting to upwards of £1,600. Towards this subscriptions of upwards of £200 had been promised, and in response to an appeal for "a golden collection," augmented by a few subscriptions from personal friends of the pastor, the amount placed in the boxes at the doors, after sermons by him, amounted to nearly £1,400.

CHAPTER XIV.

PREPARATIONS FOR WORK AT NEW CHURCH.

Document Placed Under Foundation Stone—Memorial Windows.

The Foundation Stone of the New Church being declared as well and truly laid, Mr. James Lever then read the following document, which was placed under the stone :—

“ Congregational Church, St. George’s Road, Bolton. In the name, for the worship, and to the glory of the Triune Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit, the Creator of the Universe, the Redeemer and Saviour of sinful men, this projected building is now dedicated for the use of the Church and Congregation of the Independent or Congregational order, aforetime meeting in Duke’s Alley Chapel, under the pastorate of the Rev. William Hope Davison, who desire by its erection to provide additional accommodation for the public worship of Almighty God, which has been hitherto greatly deficient in this rapidly increasing town ; and to secure the formation of a third Church and Congregation of the denomination to which they are attached. In humble faith, and with earnest prayers, they would consecrate this sanctuary to its holy uses.

“ They rear its walls for the proclamation of salvation through Jesus Christ, the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

“ They rest upon and maintain the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures as the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever, and accept them as the rule of their faith and practice. They desire to maintain and observe the order and discipline of the Apostolic Churches. They believe in God the Father, Almighty Maker of Heaven and Earth ; and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried ; who rose again on the third day, ascended into Heaven and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty, from whence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. They believe in the Holy Ghost, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the dead, and the life everlasting. Their prayer is that this may ever be a temple consecrated to the service of the Most High God. May He make it His rest, and glorify it with His presence ! Be it holiness unto the Lord ! Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces, O Zion ! This corner stone was laid on Good Friday, April 18th, in the year of our Lord, 1862, and in the twenty-sixth year of the reign of her most gracious Majesty Queen Victoria, by Thomas Barnes, Esq., M.P. for this borough. On it pastor and people would gratefully and confidently inscribe ‘ The Lord hath been mindful of us ; He will bless us.’ Signed, Wm. Hope Davison, Pastor ; Adam Ferguson, Treasurer ; James Lever, James Atherton, Secretaries ; James Nicholson, John Higginbottom, Richard Shaw, Joseph Bradshaw, George Bell, Ralph Almond, Joseph Ormrod, Deacons ; Thomas Barnes, M.P. ; Thomas Oliver, Architect.”

The two stained glass windows in the Church, and behind the choir gallery, are memorial windows, the one on the right side nearest the organ being "Dedicated to the Glory of God and in memory of John Rothwell, Esq. Born, November 12th, 1785; died, December 26th, 1860, by his son, Charles Rothwell."

The one on the left side is "To the Glory of God in memory of Elizabeth, the Beloved Wife of John Manchester. Born, April 23rd, 1813; died, July 22nd, 1862. Also of John Edward, their only son. Born, December 27th, 1853, and died, January 19th, 1863."

Dr. Charles Rothwell was a remarkable man in many ways, and with Mr. Manchester was a great supporter of Mr. Davison in his extension projects, as were others of the early men prominent with us at this time.

CHAPTER XV.

DEDICATION AND START OF WORK.

Dedication Services—First Meeting of Church in its New Sanctuary—Lee Chapel, Horwich—Fresh Accession from Duke's Alley—Joseph Fox's Jubilee Sermon—Fifth Anniversary—History of Nonconformity in Bolton—Reformer's Stronghold—Puritan Forefathers—Clearing Debt—Goodwin Street Mission—Presentations to Missioner and His Wife—Mission Given Up—Alterations in 1870—Votes of Thanks—London Missionary Society—Land Acquired for Infant School—Death of Mr. Ralph Almond—His Services.

The New Church was opened and Dedicated in the following manner. On the last Sabbath day in March (29th), 1863, the Pastor preached in the schoolroom under the Church, in the afternoon, at 3-0 o'clock, to the children, and in the evening from Psalm cxxxvii., 5 and 6, to the Congregation. The opening services on Good Friday, April 3rd, 1863, were well attended. In the morning the Pastoral Symphony from "The Messiah" was rendered on the organ by Mr. Robert Rostron, of Folds Road. The Rev. W. H. Davison made the customary declaration, and the Rev. Henry Allon, of Islington, preached after prayers had been offered by the Rev. G. D. McGregor and the Rev. Robert Best. The first outside preacher in the new church was the Rev. H. Allon, of Islington,

and at the close he appealed for funds, announcing that the church had cost £6,000 to build, and £1,300 then remained to clear the debt. At that service £80 10s. was collected. The evening service drew another influential congregation. The collections for the day were £130 3s. 8d.

On the Sunday following, the 5th of April, the Rev. Dr. Vaughan, of London, preached. On the following Wednesday, the 8th of April, the Rev. Samuel Martin, of Westminster, preached. On the Thursday, the 9th of April, a large Tea Party was held under the presidency of Thomas Barnes, Esq., M.P. On the Sunday following, the 12th day of April, the Rev. H. Griffiths, M.A., and the Rev. Dr. Parker preached, and on Tuesday, the 14th inst., the Rev. Hugh Stowell Brown preached.

The opening services were therefore continued over a short period, and with the possession of the larger and more beautiful place of worship, the Pastor, the Rev. William Hope Davison, appears to have entered on labours more abundant, and the Church increased greatly as well as the Congregation.

The first meeting of the Church, as a Church, took place in its new sanctuary on the first Sunday in May (3rd), 1863.

After solemn prayer and a reference by the Pastor to church life, the Ordinance of the Lord's Supper was observed, and the following persons were received as Members of the old Church in its new sanctuary:—Mrs. Russell, Mr. and Mrs. Swinton, Miss Hannah Walsh, Mr. Davenport, Mrs. Knowles, Mr. William Schofield, Mr. John Whewell, Mrs. Middlehurst, Mr. James and Mrs. Taylor, and Mr. John Phillips.

In 1867, the Rev. William Hope Davison took charge of the Church at Lee Chapel, Horwich, preaching and presiding at Church Meetings and Lord's Supper monthly. This appears to have been after the Rev. M. Hardaker resigned, and during the time the Church was without a Pastor, supplies being obtained for two years.

Certain of the friends at Duke's Alley who had elected to remain there when the new Church was formed at that place, expressed a wish early in 1867, to be invited to the parent Church at St. George's Road, and a resolution was passed at this time, "that they be received." The Pastor, however, was also empowered to offer them free attendance at the Lord's Supper without membership here, to any who might eventually

desire to return to Duke's Alley on a change of pastorate taking place there.

The Rev. Joseph Fox preached a jubilee sermon in the Congregational Church, St. George's Road, on Sunday morning, February 9th, 1868. This discourse was founded on Acts xiii., 52: "The disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Ghost." He spoke first of the character of those who believe, and secondly of the privileges they enjoy. A very large congregation was present, and the sermon was listened to with great attention. Considering the advanced years of the preacher, the discourse was delivered with considerable spirit and energy. Mr. Fox said that he began his ministry in Bolton fifty years before that time, in Duke's Alley Chapel.

At that time the Church had been without a pastor four years, and was small in number. There was no building for Sabbath School Work, the scholars having to meet in the Chapel, the chapel-house, and in what was known as "Dr. Simpson's study." The Chapel itself was small and inconvenient. Mr. Fox was Pastor eight years, and during that time, in answer to the earnest prayers of God's people, success followed their labours. Contrasting the state of the Church in 1868 with what it was in his ministry, he considered the present pastor and people had much to be thankful for. He prayed that peace and joy and continued prosperity would be their lot.

The Fifth Anniversary of the opening of the above Church, and the 116th of the formation of the first Congregational Church in Bolton, was celebrated on Sunday, April 5th, 1868, when sermons were preached morning and evening by the Rev. William Hope Davison. The subject of the discourse in the evening was "The History of Nonconformity in Bolton." A collection was made at the close of each service, in aid of the effort of the Congregation to remove the remaining debt on the building, which amounted to seventeen hundred pounds.

This sermon is so interesting that it is worthy of record. The rev. gentleman took for his text, Mark iv., 30, 31, 32. After explaining the meaning of the parable, and setting forth its practical lessons, applicable to the individual and the Church alike, he then alluded to the expansion of the Church as the subject of ancient prophecy.

That the prophecy was being fulfilled the facts connected with the history of Congregational Churches in our own country and in our own locality abundantly proved, the grain of mustard seed having become a great tree and shooting out great branches. Sixty years before the population of this county was 751,000, and there were then only 38 Congregational Churches in it, accommodating 12,500 hearers. The population in 1868 was 2,433,000 ; but we had 226 Congregational places of worship, with 114,720 sittings.

The first fact he called attention to was that Nonconformity is much older in this land than is generally supposed ; and especially the Congregational form of Nonconformity, which had a settled and recognised existence long before the date usually assigned to it. Long anterior to Brown—from whom the Congregationalists were called Brownists—Congregationalism had established itself in the land and its principles were recognised. There are abundant evidences that separations from the Roman Church were frequent long before the Reformation, and that not only private individuals, but monks and priests, and societies, returned to the more simple faith of the New Testament and to primitive usage. There are many sects who turned their backs upon Rome even before John Wickliffe and Martin Luther showed the way of truth more perfectly.

Many congregations were existing, with their pastors and deacons, both in the south and in the north, early in the sixteenth century ; and in this neighbourhood, during the reign of Queen Mary, there were societies of faithful men and women who would not conform to established usages and ordinances, to whom John Bradford and George Marsh ministered, as they had opportunity, the gospel of the grace of God.

The Parish Church was a curacy in the diocese of Lichfield, and Deane had been built about 45 years when, on Palm Sunday, 313 years before, George Marsh, who had been for some time a minister of the Gospel, but, as he said, "not a priest," was summoned to appear before the Earl of Derby and his council, "touching the heresy of his preaching and writing in this neighbourhood." The persecution of its Christian men and women, and the difficulties attending their profession of the Gospel, made them strong in the

grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Bolton was the stronghold of the principles of the Reformation. Many foreign Protestants found refuge here, and the Word of the Lord was proclaimed by some of the most holy and devoted ministers who ever lived.

The New Bank Street Chapel was opened in 1696.

After this a change took place. The ejected had done their work, and had passed to their rest and reward. They were true nobles of the Divine Kingdom, men tried in the fire, men of faith, of rare courage, of incorruptible fidelity. The Puritan soul was dauntless in these old men.

Their learning was as polite as it was profound. They were earnest and full-hearted in their devotion. Religion took full possession of them. Of freedom they were ready champions, and but for them and their predecessors even civil liberty had hardly won its triumphs in this land. Stern they might be in reproving the licentiousness and follies of the age ; but they knew also how to be gentle and tender and sympathetic, and there is no pathos such as can be found in much of their writings. Firm as a rock, they were serene as the stars. Their witness is in Heaven, and their record is on high.

During 1868, a strong effort was made to pay off the whole of the Church debt, and after a sermon by the Rev. W. Hope Davison, the children's collection was £107. The Anniversary Sermons were also preached by the Pastor on April 5th, 1868, when the magnificent sum of £1,735 was raised, the year being thus rendered a memorable one.

After this a cordial invitation was given to Mr. Davison to take the oversight of the Church in Grosvenor Street, Manchester, but he again declined.

On February 20th, 1869, it was stated that the mission work in Goodwin Street, would for the future come under the supervision and care of the Members of the Congregational Church, St. George's Road, of which the Rev. W. H. Davison was Pastor. Mr. Atkinson, the missionary, stated that he had expended 1,849 hours in paying 3,660 visits, during which he met with 962 men, 4,622 women, and 578 youths, who were conversed with upon subjects connected with their moral and spiritual welfare. There had also been held 66 Sunday services, with an attendance of 3,893 ; while Mr. William Abbatt's

Men's Bible Class had held 101 meetings, the total attendance being 2,584 ; and the Sunday School had met 101 times, the attendance being 5,121.

This mission was started at the suggestion of Mr. James Lever, who found that St. George's Road School was too fine a place for some of the old Lark Street scholars, and who in consequence were dropping off in attendance at Sunday School on that account. The resolution relating to this matter reads : " That a Congregational Mission be established in Little Bolton," and " that the premises and work in Goodwin Street, which was then occupied as an unsectarian mission station with the agent, should be adopted as a first step towards such an undertaking."

The Pastor, Deacons, and the male members who were present at that meeting formed themselves into a sub-committee for the purpose of making all the requisite preliminary arrangements, and Messrs. Adam Ferguson, James Lever, and Mr. W. Abbatt, were appointed to take charge of the work here.

On Saturday evening, March 5th, 1870, the congregation and friends connected with this Mission assembled in large numbers for the purpose of inaugurating a Band of Hope in connection with this place. After tea, Mr. Bewick was called to the chair, and addresses explaining their objects were delivered by Mr. Atkinson (the Evangelist), Mr. John Thomasson, and others. Mr. Thomas Dawson, on behalf of the Congregation and Sunday School, presented to Mr. Atkinson a handsome mahogany bookcase, in acknowledgment of his arduous labours during the three years he had been amongst them ; and to Mrs. Atkinson, a beautiful rosewood workbox, for the interest she had taken in the Mission. Mr. Atkinson very feelingly responded to the testimonials, remarking that in the midst of the difficulties they had to encounter, it was gratifying to find there was the greatest unanimity prevailing, and he trusted that they would continue to work pleasantly and successfully together.

There is no doubt that the Mission was a great success while under our auspices.

This Mission was carried on for three years, and then given up, much to Mr. Lever's disappointment, owing to the fact that the Finance Committee were emphatic in their

opinion that when the new work at Blackbank Street commenced, "that the Mission at Goodwin Street should be given up."

Accordingly, on March 22nd, 1871, they caused a resolution to that effect to be entered on the books. This matter was further considered at committee meetings, and finally, on May 10th, 1871, we find recorded, "That the recommendation of the Deacons 'that under existing circumstances it is desirable to relinquish Goodwin Street Mission and schoolroom' be adopted."

This was done and the furniture left there for a short time, the Primitive Methodists being allowed to enter into possession of the place and try if they could build up an interest there. This they failed to do, and on November 2nd, 1871, some of the forms were sold and the remainder placed in storage until they could be used elsewhere. The Mission premises are now used as a skipmaker's works.

During the extensive alterations made in the year 1870, the Sabbath services were held in the Schoolroom. These alterations comprised a new heating apparatus, the removal of the organ (which at this time stood in the centre of the choir gallery) to the end of the choir gallery, where the present one remains. The addition of a stone pulpit exhibited by a Nottingham firm in 1862, in place of the unsightly gilded chair and footstool in use then, and the entire re-beautifying of the interior of the fabric, a novel kind of decoration being introduced into the ceiling, consisting of a blue ground, relieved by stars in gilt.

After undergoing this extensive and thorough renovation, the Church was re-opened on Sunday, August 28th, 1870, the Rev. W. H. Davison, preaching morning and evening. This work caused the Church to be closed six or seven weeks, and the alterations made in the internal arrangements added greatly to the comfort of the worshippers. The north gallery was extended to the full length of the building, thus affording increased accommodation. The Communion was enclosed and laid with a beautiful mosaic pavement, the whole of these alterations being in perfect keeping with the architectural details of the building. The pulpit was elaborated with the text, "We preach Christ Crucified."

The wooden platform, which previously existed, was rendered somewhat unsafe owing to its nearness to the heating apparatus. The whole was effected at a cost of about £650, which was raised at and shortly after the re-opening of the Church.

Very little of interest appears in the Minutes between the years 1868 and 1873, beyond routine work and votes of thanks, two of which we glean, as follows :—"That the best thanks of the Committee be presented to Mr. John Horrocks for his long and valued service as Secretary." This is a Finance Committee resolution of date April 5th, 1871. They also record one on May 8th, 1872 :—"That the very best thanks of this meeting be given to Mr. R. Shaw for his long and valuable services as Treasurer."

At the Deacons' Meeting on December 29th, 1873, the following letter from the Rev. William Hewgill, of Farnworth, was considered :—

"Will you have the kindness to lay before the Deacons the accompanying resolution, passed unanimously at a meeting of the Committee of the Bolton and Farnworth Auxiliary of the London Missionary Society, on December 23rd. The date of the Anniversary Services will be Sunday, February 15th and following days, and the Committee will meet on January 22nd, 1874, to make the detailed arrangements for the services. The resolution reads: 'Moved by the Rev. Robert Best and seconded by the Rev. J. C. Nesbitt and carried unanimously, that this Committee through its secretary cordially invites the Congregational Church at St. George's Road to unite with the sister churches in the town and neighbourhood, in the Anniversary Services held in connection with the London Missionary Society, and also to become members of the Bolton and Farnworth Auxiliary to that Society.'"

At the Church Meeting on December 31st, 1873, the above invitation to unite with the sister churches in these services, was acceded to.

The next move of importance was the preparations necessary for the building of an Infant School, which was called for in order to supply the wants of the children, as set forth at that time in the government report

Land, therefore, had to be purchased, and it became necessary to obtain land again which had formerly been owned by us, but not being needed at the time, was sold. The negotiations for purchase commence with a suggestion that Mr. James Holt be requested to see Mr. Joseph Ormrod in reference to the land offered for sale which was then in the occupation of

the Bolton Carriage Company. This was on October 13th, 1873, and after various negotiations, the report of the Sub-Committee appointed to wait upon Mr. R. Almond, the purchaser, for the purpose of learning his views, with regard to the land adjoining the Church, was as follows:—Mr. R. Almond expressed himself perfectly agreeable, if the Church and Congregation desired it, to convey the whole of the land and premises to them, with the understanding that the money expended by him should be considered as mortgaged, with interest payable thereon, at 5 per cent. per annum; or he was willing to let the Church and Congregation have 10 or 12 yards, or any other width they wished, at a rate per yard which might be agreed upon, the Church and Congregation undertaking to indemnify Mr. Almond from any loss which might arise from a sale of the remainder of the property, or any loss from the letting of the same, the property to be supposed to yield 5 per cent."

Mr. Gregory moved and Mr. H. S. Sturges seconded, and the motion was carried unanimously: "That this Committee recommend to the Church and Congregation to retain the whole of the land, recently purchased by Mr. Almond, on their behalf, upon the terms and conditions now submitted to this Committee."

This action was confirmed at the Church Meeting on February 12th, 1874, on a motion by Mr. H. S. Sturges, with Mr. W. Milligan as the seconder. At this meeting also, a further resolution moved by Mr. B. Cole and seconded by Mr. Hy. Webster, and carried unanimously, put the matter into a more forward state: "That this meeting authorise the School Committee to proceed at once with the alteration of the building upon the land adjoining the Church, for the purpose of a temporary Infant School."

The matter was further followed up by the calling of a "Trustee Meeting," as per details recorded in circular sent out as follows:—

"At a meeting of the Church and Congregation of which you are a Trustee, held on the 12th day of February, it was resolved that a plot of land adjoining the west side of the Church and having a frontage of 10 yards to St. George's Road and extending back to Back Bark Street, should be taken for the purpose of providing Infant School accommodation, which Government requires to be done. It is therefore proposed that the same shall be conveyed to the present Trustees of the

Church, along with the premises in Blackbank Street, which are used as a school there also. A meeting will be held in the Vestry of the Church to consider the above proposals on Friday the 23rd inst."

This meeting was duly held, and the proposals adopted on a motion of Mr. Joseph Ormrod with Mr. B. Cole as seconder, the Trustees agreeing to accept the conveyance of the land to them.

Mr. James Atherton, on April 8th, 1874, submitted a plan for the new Infant Schoolroom, to the General Committee, and this was accepted.

Thanks were tendered to Mr. Almond on November 18th, 1874, for his arduous exertions in collecting so large a sum of money towards repairing the Organ and painting the Church, etc. The amount advanced by Mr. Ralph Almond was repaid in September, 1875.

Mr. Ralph Almond died at his residence somewhat unexpectedly on Wednesday night, May 9th, 1894, at the ripe old age of 84 years, and another link with the past life of the town was severed. Formerly in business as a timber merchant, he for many years had lived in retirement with the exception of holding a position on the directorate of the Atherton Spinning Company, in which concern he was a large shareholder. For many years he occupied a seat on the Board of Guardians—from 1868–1882—having alternately represented both Great and Little Bolton. He was one of our great supporters, and always interested himself in the life and work of the Church. He also founded the Wheelwrights' and Blacksmiths' Society, on December 18th, 1830, being then only 20 years old. His membership was continued up to the time of his death. His genial disposition and fatherly advice will be missed by all who knew him.

CHAPTER XVI.

The Rev. CHARLES A. BERRY, D.D.

His Birthplace—Removal to Southport—Enters Airdale College—His Call to Bolton and Its Acceptance—His Labours and Personality—Called to Wolverhampton—Removal There—His Death.

The Rev. C. A. Berry was born at Leigh, Lancashire, on December 14th, 1852. His father was a builder by trade, and although baptised and confirmed as a member of the Church of England, he became a Congregationalist by conviction. When C. A. Berry was eight years of age, the family removed to Southport, and here he was educated. At the age of fifteen he came under the influence of Dr. J. M. Macaulay, of the Dutch Reformed Church, N.Y., who resided in this country for four years, and it was this worthy man who received young Berry into the Church, and prepared him for College. Mr. Berry was seventeen years of age when he entered the Airdale Theological College, and five years later in response to the following call, he entered upon his pastorate at Bolton on the first Sunday in the year 1875, after declining several overtures from other Churches.

On March 18th, 1874, the Minutes record a resolution “that Mr. Charles Albert Berry, of Airdale College, be invited to supply the pulpit for two Sabbaths, with a request to stay the intervening week.” Various meetings followed, and some correspondence passed, and eventually Mr. Berry offered to come and preach for three Sundays, the second, third, and fourth Sundays in August. This offer was considered at a special meeting of the Members of the Church, and the deputation who had been appointed to wait upon Mr. Berry and Doctor Fraser, of Airdale College, reported the result of their interviews. After which it was decided to accept Mr. Berry’s offer, and therefore, on August 9th, 16th, and 23rd, he occupied the pulpit. This was followed by calling a special General Meeting of the Members of the Church on Thursday evening, September 10th, 1874, for the purpose of deciding as to the pastorate.



The late REV. C. A. BERRY, D.D.

Also on Wednesday evening, September 16th, a further meeting of the Church and Congregation, seatholders, and subscribers, was held for the same purpose.

The result of these two meetings was a decision to draft a call to Mr. C. A. Berry, to become the Pastor of this Church, the main features of which are as follows:—

“ We most earnestly and affectionately request you to take the oversight of us, committing our best interests to your watchful care. Our duty, as well as our privilege, will be to co-operate and encourage you in every good work. Hopefully and prayerfully we shall wait for your reply, and may the great Head of the Church direct your decision. Signed on behalf of the Church, Henry Webster, James Atherton, Henry Smith Sturges, and James Holt, Deacons of the Church.”

This call was forwarded, along with other needful details, on September 24th, 1874.

Mr. Berry accepted the call on October 9th, 1874, and on the 11th inst., the following letter was read from the pulpit after the morning and evening services:—

“ Airdale College, Bradford.

“ To the Church and Congregation worshipping in St. George’s Road Congregational Church.—The cordial invitation to minister to you in Holy Things which you have forwarded to me, has received from me that careful and prayerful consideration which is due to so important a call. I have ever felt and must ever feel that the most important crisis of my life was that in which I decided to become a Minister of Jesus Christ.

“ This being my conviction and feeling, it will easily be understood that the past few days have been to me days of perplexity, and doubt, and darkness, but, He who has in the past caused His Light to shine upon me, has once again brought me into the Light of His own purpose. I believe that just as He moved me to enter the Ministry, and as He, in answer to many private and public prayers, has led you to call me to minister among you, so now He directs me to accept your invitation and to cast in my lot with you.

“ In reply, therefore, to your call, and the directions of Providence, I consent to become your Pastor. In doing this I more than ever realise my own weakness and my great need of Divine strength and human sympathy. Ever sure of the first, I hope and believe that I shall ever receive the second from the members of my new and responsible charge.

“ That God may bless the Union now effected to the mutual good, both of you and me, and also that He may tend it to His own Glory, is my earnest and constant prayer.

“ I remain,

“ Very sincerely yours,

“ CHARLES ALBERT BERRY.”

Soon after his settlement, he found his people very sympathetic, large-minded, and responsive to his best. He

grew fast in strength and usefulness. He became a power, not only here, but throughout Lancashire. Genial, frank, and brotherly to his fellow ministers, he was the life and soul of their fraternal gatherings, and was never too busy to attend their meetings. Many sought his aid and advice in all sorts of emergencies and difficulties, and found him sympathetic in spirit and sound in judgment. He was wise and courageous in the administration of a large Church with many dependent interests. The Church in response made large sacrifices on behalf of her sister and daughter churches, and the larger interests of the kingdom of Christ, in sparing her pastor for the large and arduous ministry to which he was called. The members showed a noble spirit in every crisis through which they had to pass, and for long spaces during which their pastor was laid aside. In his own Church, and among his own people here, he was seen at his best, a tender-hearted, generous, sympathetic, lovable man, full of kindness and gentleness.

At the Deacons' Meeting on July 30th, 1883, the Pastor, the Rev. C. A. Berry, read a letter he had received from Wolverhampton that morning, inviting him to become the Pastor of that Church, and as he felt it to be a matter of such importance that he could not close his mind to the responsibility of such a call and dismiss it at once, it was agreed that all the Deacons should be present on Friday, August 3rd, to further consider the matter, and the decision arrived at by the Pastor then.

This meeting was duly held, and after consideration, the following resolution was arrived at :—

“ That after considering the circumstances in which this Church is placed by the call received by the Pastor, though earnestly wishing that his usefulness and success may continue to increase, and unwilling to press him to any decision which may be in any way to his disadvantage, we the Deacons of this Church believe that here he has a prospect of greater usefulness than hitherto, that the appreciation of our people for his talents and character appears to be steadily growing, and that though we are conscious that our Church does not compare favourably with the report of the Church at Wolverhampton, either in numbers or in ability to give him an adequate remuneration, yet, we beg him to consider the prospects of growth in the two districts, and we pray that he may be guided by Him who knows all things, to a wise decision, and, if it be to remove from us, though we shall be bereft of one who has been to us a help, we will try to believe it to be for the best, though we heartily wish he will elect to remain with us.”

The Meeting of the Church and Congregation to consider the reply of the Pastor, was held on August 8th, 1883, with Mr. J. B. Parkinson in the chair. The following is the resolution passed :—

“ That this meeting hears with extreme regret that their Pastor has received a call from another church, and in order to help him to a decision, begs to express to him their unabated attachment and the pleasure and profit they derive from his ministrations ; and that it would give them extreme pleasure if he could see his way to remain amongst them, and pledges itself should he so decide, to support him in all his efforts and to give him to the utmost of their powers every needful help.”

On Sunday, August 12th, after the morning service, the Pastor intimated his decision to resign the Pastorate, to the Deacons, Church, and Congregation, he having accepted the call to the Church at Wolverhampton, declaring his intention to close his ministry on Sunday the 23rd of September, 1883.

Many of his finest efforts as an orator, both on religious and political platforms, were marvels of completeness. His prayers, so rapt in their vision of God, so vast in their aspiration, so sympathetic with earth’s sorrows, uplifted one to thoughts of nobler things and desires. His greatest sermons helped to make Christianity credible to the whole man. He always rose to a great occasion, and often uplifted and glorified some small occasion by some mighty and magnetic utterance. He had an arrestive power over the thoughtless, and his presentation of truth was exceedingly helpful to the distressed mind. Wise, tactful, bright, industrious, with a vigilance that never flagged, although many times prostrated by attacks that were feared to be premonitory of great weakness, he yet held on to the end with unfailing usefulness, until others recognised his great worth, and finally he received a call from the Church and Congregation worshipping at the Queen Street Chapel, Wolverhampton. The decision to give Mr. Berry a call was perfectly unanimous. The Queen Street Chapel is spoken of as one of the “ Ministerial Prizes ” of the denomination, and the former Pastor, the Rev. D. Jones Hamer (previously of Richmond Chapel, Salford), had only given it up to accept a call given by the leading church in Victoria, Collins Street, Melbourne. The salary offered to Mr. Berry, as a start, was £650 per annum. Mr. Berry preached at Queen Street some

few weeks previously, and his discourses then gave such great satisfaction that it was immediately decided to give him the call which was forwarded to him.

The great secret of Mr. Berry's influence was his personal charm. His written oratory was framed on the model of a great master ; his extemporaneous oratory was his own.

On his removal to Wolverhampton, he found the still larger sphere eminently congenial. His influence increased year by year. In March, 1898, Dr. Berry was stricken by a dire illness, and laid aside nine months. On New Year's Day, 1899, he broke his silence by preaching on the "Good Word" for the year, and on the following Wednesday evening spoke at the Young People's Meeting for Prayer and Praise on "Consecration."

During the funeral of Dr. Totherick at the Wesleyan Church, Bilston, on Tuesday, January 31st, 1899, the Rev. Dr. C. A. Berry, Pastor of Queen Street Congregational Church, Wolverhampton, was seized with a sudden illness, and expired almost immediately. The Spirit had risen to the triumphant life of which he had himself just spoken.

CHAPTER XVII.

EXTENSION OF WORK.

Minister's Vestry and Ante-room Built—Death of Deacon Webster—Letter of Condolence—Land Sold—Piano Presented—Trust Deeds—Death of Mr. Milligan—Memorial Plate.

Matters went along smoothly until 1879, when Mr. William Milligan came forward with a proposition for building the Minister's Vestry and Ante-room. The details of this are best given in the records, which open with the account of what occurred at the Deacons' Meeting, held on April 22nd, 1879, when a letter was read from Mr. William Milligan, offering to build at an outlay of £300, a Minister's Vestry and Ante-room to connect the Lecture Hall with the Church, and after considerable conversation, it was resolved, "that the Secretary write Mr. Milligan, conveying to him the hearty thanks of this meeting for his munificent offer, and also to ask him to meet

the Deacons in regard to the matter on the following Monday." The following is a copy of Mr. Milligan's letter, which is dated March 30th, 1879 :—

" Ever since our Lecture Hall was built it has been found to be incomplete without a retiring room. This want I feel disposed to supply at my expense if you approve of my offer. I have had a rough sketch made of the proposed addition, which shows a building connecting the Lecture Hall with the Church.

" My desire is to provide a room suited for the Minister or Lecturer to retire into, or for the Choir when a concert takes place. It might also be used for a library for books of reference or for lending, and over the East end form a Vestry for the Choir, with an entrance to the Church.

" It is thought to be a good time for having the work done. A rough estimate of the work has been made which has led me to offer to pay the amount of three hundred pounds for the necessary work.

" If you accept my offer, it would be well to appoint a sub-committee to mature plans and ask for estimates to be laid before the Finance Committee for approval. Allow me to suggest Mr. R. Almond, Mr. H. Webster, and myself, with any other you may think fit.

" I should like the work to be done as quietly as possible, without any flourish of trumpets. The question may be asked, 'Why this outlay ?' The answer may be, 'One individual will pay.'

" Yours most respectfully,
" To the Rev. C. A. Berry." " WILLIAM MILLIGAN."

The Building Committee appointed for this extension were Messrs. Wm. Milligan, W. H. Houghton, James Atherton, J. B. Parkinson, and D. Ottewill.

On June 15th, 1879, Deacon Henry Webster, while seated in his pew in Church, passed suddenly to his rest. The service for the morning was not proceeded with, the shock being too great. He passed away amid the deep regret of all.

At the Deacons' Meeting on June 16th, the following letter of condolence was prepared, and sent to Mrs. Webster by the Secretary :—

" Dear Madam,

" I am requested to express the fervent sympathy of the Pastor and Deacons with you in your great bereavement which has so suddenly fallen upon you, and their hope that in this hour of trial, you may realize in all their fulness the consolations of our Holy Gospel. They feel keenly their own loss, and the loss of the Church, in this removal of their friend and colleague; and desire to record their high sense of the manner in which he ever aided, by word and deed, whatever was needful for the extension of His kingdom.

" They rejoice in their memory of his strong and consistent attachment to the faith of the Gospel, and in their confidence of his complete and effectual reliance on the work and promises of the Lord Jesus.

"And, while they mourn for their own loss, they rejoice at the quick and painless transition which removed their friend from the earthly sanctuary to the eternal home of praise. 'So He giveth His beloved sleep.' 'God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.' 'A father to the fatherless, and a judge of the widow is God in His holy habitation.' That you may be supported by Divine grace, cheered by the hope and promises of God, and be at last made triumphant by the same infinite mercy, is the prayer of those who worked so long with the dear departed.

" J. B. PARKINSON, Secretary."

An agreement for the sale of land and buildings adjoining the Lecture Hall was entered into by the Finance Committee on June 26th, 1879. Part of the Spinners' Hall is on this land now, and we have since had to purchase part of it back again for the new School which is shortly to be erected.

The following note is a copy of a letter read from Mr. James Smethurst at the Meeting of the Church and Congregation on June 10th, 1880 :—

"This Piano—purchased February 5th, 1868, by the following members of the Congregational Church, St. George's Road—is this day, May 1st, 1880, presented by them to the Managing Committee for the time being, as representing the Church and Congregation, for the use and benefit of such Church and Congregation, and to be henceforth considered as their property."

The subscribers were Mr. C. Rothwell, Rev. W. H. Davison, Messrs. James Holt, James Lever, A. Duxbury, R. Almond, James Smethurst, J. Orrell, John Tillotson, W. F. Tillotson, John Barben, Benjamin Cole, William Milligan, James Ormrod, Mrs. Cunliffe, and the Members of the Choir. The cost was £55.

This presentation was duly accepted with thanks to all those who had subscribed for the instrument.

At the Committee Meeting held April 26th, 1883, the secretaries reported that they had made enquiries from the College Secretary as to the Trust Deed of the Church, and he stated that the Trust Deed was deposited in the Muniment Room of the Lancashire College on the 4th of April, 1866, and it is still there. The remainder of the Deeds relating to the Church and Lecture Hall were also to be deposited in the same place.

It seems curious to find a record of attendance and report made by Mr. Milligan in October, and at the next Committee Meeting held on the 24th of November, 1887, to find the following record of his death :—

"Moved by Mr. Blundell, seconded by Mr. Cole and carried, that this Committee begs to place upon record its deep sense of the loss the Church and Congregation have sustained in the death of the late Mr. William Milligan. His connection with the Church dates from long before the erection of the present building, and his love and attachment to the place and its services were well known to all. The duties appertaining to the various offices which during a long life he filled—and in particular that of Churchwarden—were performed with a patient and steady adherence to duty which was so full and marked a characteristic of his life. His noble, open-handed, and hearty generosity for all purposes connected with the welfare of the Church, was shown on many occasions, but notably in his bearing the cost of the erection of the Minister's Vestry and Ante-room to the Lecture Hall, and the contributing of £500 towards the cost of the present Organ in the Church. This Committee has in a special sense lost in him a friendly and experienced colleague, and one in whose judgment and sagacity it could safely place a firm and just reliance. The good fight of faith was fought by him manfully, and he has now as we believe 'entered into the joy of his Lord.'"

Thus one of the Church stalwarts entered into his rest, and one of those who sacrificed so much for the building up of our present-day advantages, reaped his reward of faithful service.

At the Annual Meeting of the Church and Congregation, which was held in the Lecture Hall on January 25th, 1888, instruction was given to the Finance Committee to place a brass plate on one of the panels of the organ, "in memory of the late Mr. Milligan, who joined the Church three years before its removal from Duke's Alley to St. George's Road, and in many ways showed his interest in and affection for the place in which he worshipped. Date of his death, November 13th, 1887."

He was one of those who removed from the old home at Duke's Alley to the new one at St. George's Road, and in many ways showed his interest in both places. He was specially interested in the service of praise, and for a period of fifty years was connected with the choir, first at the one place and then at the other. He showed his interest in this part of the church's work in a practical way, by substantial gifts in his lifetime. As a further example of interest, he left a bequest of £20 towards the choir of the place he loved so well. He also left £5 for the poor of the Church, and £100 towards a new Church in place of the iron one on Blackburn Road, and as a final act, £100 to the Bolton Infirmary. One of the last acts of his life was the provision

of some furniture for the vestibule of the Church. St. George's Road Church was a place very dear to our departed friend, of which he was a warden to the very last. He died without fear and in the hope and faith of Jesus Christ. By desire of the Choir, the Funeral Service was held in the Church instead of in the Cemetery Chapel, that they might show their respect for the memory of their old friend and colleague.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE PASTORATE OF THE REV. J. R. WOLSTENHOLME, M.A.

Called to Bolton—His Acceptance Thereof—Sketch of His Career—Recognition Services—Wakefield Pastorate—Public Work—Last Minute—Removal to St. George's Road Church—First Sermon—His Work Here—Formation of Bolton District Council—Nonconformist Ministers' Association—Call to Brisbane—Departure Scenes—His Ideals—Character—Death—Memorial Tablet.

On May 15th, 1884, the following call of the Rev. J. R. Wolstenholme, M.A., to the Pastorate was agreed upon :—

" In accordance with the resolutions of Church and Congregation specially called in accordance with our custom and Church deeds, we now have the pleasure of earnestly asking you to take the oversight of us in the Lord, and we commit our best interests to your watchful care.

" We most sincerely ask you to come amongst us as the servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, to instruct and teach, reprove and warn, direct and cheer, comfort and sustain and build up the people of God, and pray that all you do may be owned by the Head of the Church, and blessed to the increase of His Kingdom amongst us. We shall feel it a privilege to do all we can to minister to your temporal comfort as our ability enables us, and as far as in us lies to hold up your hand and support your efforts in every good word and work.

" We are deeply conscious of our deficiencies, and would come earnestly to the fountain of all wisdom for guidance and strength not only to enable us rightly and heartily to do our part both for you and the Master, but that He may guide and direct you in this our invitation to come among us, and should it please Him, that many years of great usefulness may be afforded and at last the faithful servant's reward may be obtained."

This call is signed by John B. Parkinson, as Church Secretary, Henry H. Dewsbury, David Ottewill, James Atherton, Fredk. Cooper, James Lever, Arthur Henry Lee, Benjamin Cole, George Green, Adam Ferguson.



The late REV. J. R. WOLSTENHOLME, M.A.

The formal answer to this call is dated June 5th, 1884, and reads as follows :—

“ To the Church and Congregation worshipping in St. George’s Road Congregational Church, Bolton.

“ Dear Friends,

“ You have sent me a call to take the oversight of you in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Almost simultaneously another Church and Congregation sent me a similar call ; this, as you will naturally understand added to my anxiety and increased the perplexity which invitations to a pastorate always cause a minister. If, therefore, I have delayed my reply longer than you anticipated, you must be good enough to set it down to the unexpected receipt of a call other than your own.

“ It has been a very anxious time of decision in which I have not dared to trust my own judgment alone, but have sought the counsel of friends, both ministerial and non-ministerial, and above all I have sought the guidance of Him whom I serve in the Gospel. I have weighed the claims of the two Churches calling me, and also the claims of the Church to which I have ministered through ten happy years. At every turn of the matter I have asked the question ‘ Lord, what wilt thou have me to do ? ’ And the answer, which has been gradually growing in clearness and power, bids me accept the invitation which has come from you.

“ Therefore, believing I am following the indications of Providence, and obeying the will of our Heavenly Father, I cheerfully, yet with some awe, consent to become yours in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. You ask me to come amongst you as a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, so I come, but asking very seriously ‘ Who is sufficient for these things ? ’ and, if I could not feel that ‘ my sufficiency is of God,’ I should not dare to accept your call.

“ I propose to close my ministry here on the last Sunday of this month, and I hope to preach Inaugural Sermons with you on the first Sunday in September.

“ That God may abundantly bless and ratify these our engagements to one another, and cause this new relationship to be for His Glory and our profit, is the earnest prayer of yours very sincerely,

“ J. R. WOLSTENHOLME.”

“ Wakefield, June 5th, 1884.”

At the Deacons’ Meeting, held on September 29th, the recognition services of Mr. Wolstenholme were arranged to be held on Wednesday, November 12th, by Drs. McFadyan, of Manchester, and Conder, of Leeds.

The Rev. John Routledge Wolstenholme, M.A., who accepted the call to the pastorate of the St. George’s Road Church, and who commenced his ministry on September 14th, 1884, was born at Lees, near Oldham, on July 10th, 1844, his father at the time being minister of the Congregational Chapel, Springhead, but afterwards removed to Belper, Derbyshire, where he died in September, 1852.

The subject of our portrait was educated at Silcoates Congregational School, near Wakefield, of which Dr. Bewglass was then headmaster, and for whom he conceived a strong affection, and from which school he matriculated at the London University in 1862, passed the first B.A. examination in 1863, took his degree of B.A. in 1864, and the M.A. degree in 1866. Between the taking of the two degrees he also passed the first Scripture Examination of the same University. During this time he was a student in Spring Hill College, Birmingham, training for the Congregational ministry, entering the College in September, 1862, and leaving in June, 1868. In the following October he entered upon his first charge at Eastwood, a large colliery village near Nottingham. Here, before Mr. Wolstenholme appeared, there had been no other place of worship than the Established Church, but he was instrumental in gathering together a good congregation in the pretty building that was erected, in forming the band of worshippers into a church, and was so successful that the *Notts Congregational Magazine*, describing the visit of the County Union to Eastwood soon after his removal in 1874, said : " It is six years since Eastwood received the Representatives of the County Churches, and during that time a great change has taken place in the condition of Independence in that town ; the 'youngest church in the county,' as it then was, has grown and flourished so greatly, that under the blessing of God, and by the labours of the late Pastor, the Rev. J. R. Wolstenholme, that it must now be considered to be one of the most important centres of Congregational Church life in Nottinghamshire."

The start here was made with twenty-four members, and after labouring diligently for five and a half happy years, he had gathered together a strong and flourishing Church of about two hundred members.

In April, 1874, he became the Pastor of Zion Chapel, Wakefield, where he continued until he accepted the Bolton call, with many tokens of a successful ministry, no less than 307 members having been added to the church during his stay. Whilst at Wakefield he filled the following offices, namely, Secretary to Silcoates School, his old school, and was for one year its headmaster. The Committee would have been glad to make the appointment permanent, but he preferred

to remain in the regular ministry. His unselfishness showed itself nobly in the way in which he threw himself into the establishment of the John Street Mission, now self-supporting, and the erection of the Chapel as a memorial of the Centenary of Zion. The Sunday School flourished under his care. It was at his Saturday Afternoon Class for young people that he met his future wife, and in whom he found, for a brief ten years, a true helpmeet and companion in his joy and sorrow.

Whatever public work came to his hand, which concerned the bodily, social, intellectual, or moral welfare of his fellows, however arduous its nature, he did it with all his might. The offices he filled in this relation were legion. Some are Secretary to the Wakefield and Dewsbury District of the Yorkshire Congregational Union; the Wakefield Branch of the British and Foreign Bible Society; and the Charity Organisation Society; Member of the Executive of the Yorkshire Congregational Union, the Church Aid Council, the Senatus Academicus, the Wakefield Hospital Committee, and several other Committees in the town, and on the Northern Board of Education. From time to time he officiated as examiner at Spring Hill, Airdale, and Rotherham Colleges, and he was also one of the Central Examiners in the New Scheme of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, to promote religious education among Congregational youth.

He left Wakefield, having served ten years full of active usefulness, not only in his own pastorate, but as a townsman, taking an interest in the well-being of the people amongst whom he laboured. His removal was a cause of regret among his congregation and also amongst the Wakefield people generally. He came to Bolton amongst friends who were anxious to welcome and to help both him and Mrs. Wolstenholme in their new sphere in Bolton.

The following extract from the Church Book is very characteristic of the spirit of the man:—

“ The above is the last minute made by me as Pastor of the Church at Zion—a charge which I resign with very deep feelings of sorrow, because I have more than ordinary associations with the place—where I have ministered for ten happy years. Zion is where I worshipped as a school-boy, where I first joined the Church of Christ, where I succeeded the Pastor who gave me the right hand of fellowship, and where I have laboured amongst a people who have shown me much affection. And now, Lord,

accept the humble thanksgiving of Thy servant, for the favour and success Thou has granted him in Thy work here, hear his fervent prayer that Thy blessing may rest upon Zion more abundantly than ever, and may there soon be given to this people a man for Thyself, who shall more worthily and successfully carry on the work which now Thy servant leaves in Thy hands."

In the year of his marriage, 1884, he accepted the call to St. George's Road, vacant by the removal of the Rev. C. A. Berry, to Wolverhampton, and on Sunday morning, September 7th, 1884, the Rev. J. R. Wolstenholme, M.A., commenced his pastorate at St. George's Road Congregational Church, when there was a large attendance. The rev. gentleman preached from the words: 1 Thessalonians, ii. and 4, "But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the Gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men but God, who trieth our hearts." He said in the lives of all men there happened ever certain events which marked so many epochs in their history; times when their spirits made pause, and they looked back through the retrospect, bright or gloomy as the case might be, and through anxious and straining glances into the God-known future. Who had not known such times? And as years passed swiftly by, those times of spirit pause, of retrospect and prospect, would finally merge into the yet clearer and, he trusted, joyful prospect. He (the preacher) had fallen upon one of those times. That day he looked backward and forward with mingled feelings impossible to describe. Backward on the time of preparation, and the way in which God had blessed and disciplined him through two happy pastorates; forward to another time of labour in the way in which God should guide him. That day he turned a new page in his history, yet knew not what should be written thereon, though he gazed with eager eye. That day he commenced another portion of his life work, with what deep feeling, with what mixture of gladness and fear, with what of hopefulness and anxiety, he could not tell them. But as his life work was to be continued amongst them, and to be closely connected with their lives, it was only right that they should learn from him, in some measure at least, what his views respecting that work were. The text referred to the minister's authority, the minister's commission, and the minister's responsibility.

That morning, whilst making no claim at all to the Apostolic function or authority, certainly not to what some men called the Apostolic succession, he did humbly and reverently claim to be a minister of the Lord Jesus Christ. If he were questioned as to his authority, he would answer like the Apostle, that he was allowed of God, proved and called of God. Had he not believed God had called him to serve Him in the sphere of Christian ministry, he should not have accepted their invitation, to become the bishop of that Church.

Lastly, there was the minister's responsibility, to speak not as pleasing men but God. To himself, having just said farewell to one people and now greeting another, that responsibility appeared so great and perilous as at times to oppress his spirit well nigh to fainting.

Viewed in the light of later events, it appears as if the disease which eventually led him to Queensland, had already set in. So, from the first he laboured under difficulties, which prevented him from being seen at his best, except at rare moments, when the flesh was transfigured with the light of the Spirit, and his high intellectual gifts were manifest in all their strength then.

He set about his work in Bolton with characteristic tact and energy, introducing into his Church new institutions and methods as opportunity served and occasion demanded. One of these was the Annual Temperance Sermon, when he lifted up his voice with power against intemperance and its evils. Among others were the Watch-night Service—ever a solemn and impressive service.

It was his custom to take a Catechumen Class for young people over sixteen, on a Sunday afternoon in the closing months of the year, through a course on the attainment of the Christian life, its duties and responsibilities, and in Congregational principles. He was thus successful in leading fifty-three into the Church, and it was to this class that he made his last earnest appeal from the pulpit of St. George's Road.

He laboured patiently and earnestly for years to get the Church to undertake a Mission in the Victory district, Chorley Old Road, and although he failed, his influence went forth, and eventually resulted in the cause being carried there by some

of his truest workers. When Kay Street Mission was opened, it was a great joy to him and his wife.

The formation of the Bolton District Congregational Council had his warmest support, and Chorley Old Road Church is the child of this Council. Mr. Wolstenholme is looked upon as the founder of this Council by many. He had also to do with the founding of the Bolton Nonconformist Ministers' Association, was one of the local secretaries of the Bible Society, and threw himself heart and soul into the work of the London Missionary Society and Church Aid Society. All philanthropic efforts had his warmest sympathy and practical support, and he took deep interest in the affairs and management of the Infirmary and Poor Protection Society.

For some time before he left Bolton his work had been frequently interrupted by ill-health, and when a call came to him to Brisbane, he accepted it in the hope that a more congenial climate would restore him to fresh vigour. The details of this call were discussed at the Deacons' Meeting, held on July 4th, 1892, when the Pastor, the Rev. J. R. Wolstenholme, M.A., read a letter he had received from the Wharf Street Church, Brisbane, giving him a call to that Church, which, from the important position and wide sphere open to its Minister, he felt called for some consideration at his hands. The Deacons, not knowing the feeling of the Church on this matter, by consent of the Pastor, issued a circular, asking the opinion of the Members: "Is it advisable in your opinion that Mr. Wolstenholme should accept the invitation to Brisbane?" at the same time stating the information asked was for the guidance of the Deacons. The return was very gratifying, unquestionably showing the loyalty of the Church to the Pastor, and this was stated at the Ordinance on Sunday, August 7th.

On August 18th a letter was received from the Pastor, informing the Deacons that he had cabled his acceptance of the call, and would terminate his pastorate among us at the end of the year. On the Sunday following this letter was read in the Church after Morning Service.

At the Deacons' Meeting of December 27th, 1892, Mr. Cole, on behalf of the Deacons, expressed their sorrow at the loss of Mr. Wolstenholme's services, and expressed an earnest

hope and prayer for his future success in his new pastorate, also for the complete restoration of his health. Thanks were tendered for his uniform consideration and gentlemanly kindness. It was later agreed that his last sermon should be printed.

His departure called forth a remarkable outburst of affection, which deeply touched him, and revealed to him the strength of his hold upon his people and his friends. We who attended, will ever remember it as long as life lasts. He had been a severe sufferer by the collapse of the Liberator and kindred societies, and he arrived in the colony to find his new people impoverished by the terrible floods that had destroyed a part of Brisbane, and by the general financial depression that then prevailed in Australia. However, he took up his work in his own strong, brave, hopeful way ; and though his ministry was so brief, he had begun to make himself felt as a force in the religious life of the Colony. To the grief of his people, and the lasting sorrow of numberless friends, he passed away on May 30th, 1894, aged forty-nine.

Mr. Wolstenholme's ideal of the Christian preacher was of the highest, and he spared no pains in his endeavour after it. His sermons were most carefully prepared, rich in thought, apt in illustration, and, withal, cast in the finest moulds of cultured speech. His grace of delivery minimised the drawbacks attending the use of manuscript, and in grace of style and descriptive power he surpassed himself as a lecturer. He had a passionate love of nature, and sought her out in her loveliest and sublimest retreats. Somewhat brusque at times in his straightforwardness, he was honest as the day, and generous to a fault. Money had no snare for him, and he rose infinitely above all those meannesses into which the love of money has often dragged the pulpit. His loyalty to principle and duty was most marked. It was this that led him, on one occasion, to decline a very tempting call, because the brewing interest in the Church would have clashed with his principles of total abstinence. He could be severely sarcastic on occasion, and as richly humorous. The secret of his life was his complete consecration to Christ. “ John Routledge Wolstenholme was God's Man.” So he lived and so he died, and his works do follow him.

A tablet was erected to his memory in the Church, and bears the following inscription :—

“ In Loving Memory of the Rev. J. R. Wolstenholme, M.A., Pastor of this Church from 1884 to 1892. An earnest and cultured preacher, and devoted to his people. Died at Brisbane, May 30th, 1894. Aged 49 years.”

CHAPTER XIX.

VALIANT WORKERS.

Silver Anniversary—Death of Mr. W. F. Tillotson—Cottage Services—Mr. J. B. Parkinson's Services—Deacon Lomax—Deacon Taylor—Church Secretary—Memorial Tablets Erected—Alteration of Pulpit—Presentations by Mr. and Mrs. Blundell—Nonconformist Council—Death of Mr. John Thomasson.

The Silver Anniversary of the building was celebrated in 1888. Dr. Allon, who preached the first sermon in the sanctuary in St. George's Road, preached also on the 25th Anniversary, April 8th, two able and eloquent discourses, and the collections for the day amounted to £70.

A Celebration Tea Party was held on Thursday, the 12th, which proved a very enjoyable and successful affair. It was hoped that the two former pastors would be present, but only the Rev. C. A. Berry was able to be there, the Rev. W. Hope Davison being too much out of health to venture. A letter, however, was read from him, expressing his regret, and his best wishes for the celebration of self-denying labours of 25 years ago. A stimulating and encouraging address was delivered by Mr. Berry. The Rev. J. R. Wolstenholme, and Messrs. Adam Ferguson, James Lever, J. Robinson, and James Atherton also spoke. The choir discoursed sweet music, and friends had an opportunity of indulging in reminiscences with each other. Altogether, a very pleasant evening was passed.

One of those who rendered yeoman service for the cause of Congregationalism was Mr. W. F. Tillotson, J.P. His name was a very familiar one to the earlier worshippers, while many are still living who were personally acquainted with him, and greatly admired his sterling qualities, but, not till death had taken him, did we realise how great a blank his loss caused. He had discernment of the times, knew what the public wanted,



The late MR. JAMES BROMILEY.



The late Deacon H. WEBSTER.



The late Deacon JOSEPH TAYLOR.



The late MR. J. B. PARKINSON.

and set himself with **zeal** and determination to meet these wants. What he took in hand he did with all his heart. As a Congregationalist, Mr. Tillotson did much for the denomination without any ostentation. What counsel he could give was heartily given. We append a resolution passed by the Finance Committee, owing to death having once again laid its hands upon one of our respected members. At the Committee Meeting on February 21st, 1889, the following resolution of condolence was recorded :—

“ That we, the members of the Finance Committee, beg to place upon record, our deep regret at the loss we have sustained through the sudden removal by death of Mr. W. F. Tillotson, J.P., who for many years was closely connected with us in the work of this Committee, and who in many ways showed himself as an earnest well-wisher for the welfare of the Church. We would also express our deep sympathy with his widow and family, and whilst assuring them of our kind feelings towards them in their sad bereavement, and our prayers on their behalf, we would commend them to the comforts and consolations of Divine Grace, in full assurance that He who ordains the lot of His people, will not fail them in the hour of their need.”

Mr. W. F. Tillotson joined the Church in October, 1864, and died February 19th, 1889. The funeral sermon was preached by the Rev. C. A. Berry, of Wolverhampton, in St. George’s Road Church.

On Wednesday, November 6th, 1889, a most interesting gathering took place ; all the workers in connection with the Cottage Services met for tea and conference. The Rev. J. R. Wolstenholme presided and addressed the workers in encouraging words. The secretary, Mr. Fred Cooper, gave some account of the work done and attempted. He reported that seven cottages had been opened for these services in various parts of the town, and that 16 conductors and 66 workers to accompany them had volunteered for this Christian enterprise ; that more workers could have been had to the number of 100 had they been required ; never before had there been such a universal willingness to engage in this kind of work. Many of the members entered into an earnest conversation respecting the kind of services required, and the best way of conducting them ; also how gradually to train those who accompany to help in the devotional part of the service, into becoming conductors themselves. Altogether a very pleasant and profitable evening was spent.

At the close of the Deacons' Meeting, March 27th, 1893, a footnote appears at the end of the Minutes. This reads as follows : " This closes my third term of service as secretary, extending from April, 1879, to this date.—John Butler Parkinson."

At the same meeting it was resolved, " That the best thanks of the Deacons be given to Mr. J. B. Parkinson for his long and faithful service as secretary, and that the Deacons hope relief from official duty will be conducive to a speedy restoration to health." This is signed by Joseph Taylor, chairman. The same book records that Mr. Parkinson was appointed as a Deacon in the year 1850.

At the Deacons' Meeting, May 30th, 1893, a letter was read from Deacon Lomax, in which he said, that in consequence of ill-health, and acting under the doctor's advice, he had removed to Darwen. He therefore felt it to be his duty to place his resignation in the hands of the Church.

On October 6th, 1893, a letter from Deacon Taylor was received. This was addressed to the Deacons and the Church, resigning his office as Deacon at the end of the year on account of his age (76). The Secretary was desired to see him and know if he would withdraw the letter and continue his office.

On October 30th, the Secretary reported his interview with Deacon Joseph Taylor, and stated that he still adhered to the terms of his letter, and wished the Church to accept his resignation. Feeling his advancing years, he thought it was better that room should be made for younger members, and it was therefore resolved to recommend the Church to elect him as Honorary Deacon for life.

Mr. Taylor died in June, 1896, and a letter of condolence and sympathy was sent to the family.

At the Deacons' Meeting, held on January 8th, 1894, the question of Secretary was discussed. Mr. Sturges having resigned that office at the previous meeting owing to the serious state of his health at that time. His urgent request to be relieved from the duties, was acceded to with regret, and the assurance of the high appreciation of his services held by the Deacons.

A ballot was therefore taken for a new secretary, and Mr. Steele was elected. He, however, persistently declined to

accept this position owing to other engagements. Consequently the appointment was left over until January 8th, when Mr. Steele was prevailed upon to accept the office if he could be released from work at Blackburn Road Church. A deputation consisting of Mr. James Atherton, Mr. B. Cole, and Mr. F. Cooper was therefore appointed to wait upon the Teachers there to put the matter before them. On January 29th they reported that the Teachers could not agree to release Mr. Steele from his work there, and consequently he could not accept the appointment as Secretary to the Deacons. Mr. Sturges, therefore, continued to serve.

At the Deacons' Meeting held on December 21st, 1894, Messrs. B. Cole, James Atherton, and James Bromiley, were deputed to consider the best mode of placing on record in the Church, the names of the late Rev. W. Hope Davison and the Rev. J. R. Wolstenholme, two former pastors who passed away during the year 1894. This took the form of memorial tablets on the church walls, the particulars of which are recorded in the biographical sketches of the two ministers named.

At a meeting of the Deacons, held on Monday evening, February 25th, 1895, the following resolution was unanimously passed on the motion of Mr. Fred Cooper, seconded by Mr. Cole :—

“ That in view of the early settlement of our new Pastor (the Rev. Geo. Barber) among us, we think it fitting to place on record an expression of our warm appreciation of the devotion to the work of the Church, which has been shown by Mr. H. Sturges, the secretary of the Deacons during the time he has held that office.

“ Mr. Sturges's patient and untiring labours during the long period we have been without a Pastor, have won our grateful admiration.

“ We feel that in his character as the principal officer of the Church (in the lack of Pastor) he has largely contributed to make possible the harmony and unity which have so happily prevailed.

“ Feeling this we ask Mr. Sturges to accept this assurance of our appreciative esteem, and respectfully request him to record this resolution in the Minutes of the Deacons.”

This is signed by John Butler Parkinson, James Atherton, William Steele, James Bromiley, Fred Isherwood, John Hulme, Joseph Taylor, Benjamin Cole, Fred Cooper, David Ottewill, William Barlow, and John Thomasson.

The pulpit was altered a good deal about September, 1895, being made larger and altogether more attractive in

style, and, in view of the extra expense incurred by this alteration, it was resolved on the motion by Mr. Edge, seconded by Mr. H. S. Sturges, that a special appeal be made to the congregation on Sunday, October 27th, for the purpose of clearing off the debt. In the meantime, a circular was also issued to the seatholders, which was signed by the Rev. Geo. Barber, the Treasurer, and Secretary.

In November, 1895, the Treasurer reported that he had received a cheque from Mr. James Bromiley for £50, which had been applied in payment to the Memorial Tablets which had then been erected.

On December 16th, 1895, the best thanks of the Committee were tendered to Mr. T. Blundell for his generous gift of a new Communion Table to the Church. The inscription on this reads as follows :—" Congregational Church, St. George's Road. This Communion Table was presented to the Church by Mr. and Mrs. T. Blundell, November, 1895."

At the Deacons' Meeting, held July 27th, 1896, a letter was read from the Free Church Ministers' Association with regard to the proposal to form a Nonconformist Council, and asking for two delegates along with the minister to attend a proposed meeting when called. Mr. James Atherton and Mr. Wm. Steele were appointed.

On December 1st, 1896, a letter of condolence was sent to express the sympathy of the Pastor and Deacons, to Mrs. Thomasson and family, in the loss sustained by the death of her husband, Mr. John Thomasson, who was for several years a highly esteemed Deacon of the Church. He died on Sunday, November 15th, 1896, from a disease of the heart.

For three years Mr. John Thomasson held the position of Deacon, and during that time, short as it was, had won the affection and esteem of all who served with him in the sacred office. He was a wise counsellor and a faithful friend, and no one could have been more conscientious in the discharge of his duties than he. For sixteen years he was a teacher in the Sunday School, and would have remained, no doubt, a teacher to the end of his life, had not failing health compelled him to retire. All his lifetime he was associated with St. George's Road, and was a scholar when the Church and School met in Duke's Alley. He was also an active Temperance worker.

His death was very sudden. Whilst getting ready for morning service at the Church he loved, he heard the call, and before the Church bells had ceased, he had entered into, and was taking part in, the richer and diviner service in the City of God.

CHAPTER XX.

MR. JAMES LEVER.

Presentation of Illuminated Address—Its Record of Service—Signatures Thereto—Mr. Lever's Personal Recollections—Speech of Mr. W. H. Lever—Religious Services of Mr. James Lever—Death—Funeral Service.

At the Deacons' Meeting held on April 27th, 1894, the members present felt that something should be done to recognise the great and valuable services to the Church which had been rendered by Mr. James Lever. Accordingly it was decided that an illuminated address should be presented to him, he being the oldest member of the Church, and this was done at a social gathering held on May 9th, 1894, in the Lecture Hall.

Mr. James Lever, of Harwood Lodge, had decided at this time to leave Bolton for Thornton, and his high personal character and faithful service could not have been recognised by the Church and Congregation in a more fitting way.

The Lecture Hall was chastely decorated, a prominent feature on one wall being framed portraits of three former ministers of the Church—the Rev. W. H. Davison, the Rev. C. A. Berry, and the Rev. J. R. Wolstenholme; Mr. James Lever's portrait also being added later.

The chair was occupied by Mr. Benjamin Cole, and he was supported by the guest of the evening, Mr. James Lever. Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Lever, Mr. J. D. Lever, Mr. and Mrs. J. S. Ferguson, Mrs. Tillotson, Mr. L. Tillotson, Mr. R. Shaw, and many officers, past and present, of the Church, as well as numerous old friends of the Congregation, also attended.

The Chairman, at the outset, called upon Mr. H. S. Sturges, Secretary, who read a letter from Mr. Adam Ferguson, the first Superintendent of Duke's Alley School, regretting his inability to be present. The Chairman, congratulated those

present upon the progress made in the town by the Church, formerly at Duke's Alley and now at St. George's Road, and acknowledged the work done by Mr. Lever, their guest, who had not only been Chairman and one of the Executive of the Building Committee of that Church, but was formerly a Deacon and an earnest worker in the Church, Sunday School, and every organisation connected with them.

Mr. Joseph Taylor, in presenting the address to Mr. Lever, said the Church had known no wiser counsellor, nor had it had a more excellent Christian man, one who had given his whole heart to the work of his Master. When he left them his name would be in the hearts of their children and children's children, and as familiar as household words. His name was indissolubly connected with the history of that Church, and if any man was entitled to the phrase of "grand old man," it was Mr. Lever. He then read the address, which was in illuminated book form, elegantly executed in colours, with a drawing of St. George's Road Church on the first page ; the whole being in Messrs. Hasler, Watson & Co.'s best style.

THE ADDRESS :

" To James Lever, Esq., Harwood Lodge, Harwood, from St. George's Road Congregational Church, Bolton.

" Dear Mr. Lever,

" We, the Deacons and Members of St. George's Road Congregational Church and Congregation, having heard of your approaching departure from Bolton, desire to express to you the sincere regret with which we regard that event, and also to assure you of the high esteem in which we hold your Christian character, as well as our appreciation of the kindly advice and generous assistance which you have so often and so willingly rendered during the many years you have been connected with us. We call to mind your faithful service at Duke's Alley Chapel and Schools, before the building of our present structure, as well as the untiring zeal manifested by you during the erection of the Church on St. George's Road, and the energy with which you, and those associated with you, brought the latter work to a successful completion, leaving it as a sacred legacy to us and future generations, and demanding our grateful acknowledgment. We honour you as one of the first superintendents of our Sunday School, and recall with thankfulness how, mainly through your efforts, and notwithstanding many difficulties, the foundations of its present prosperity were laid. We honour you also as the oldest member of our Church, and as a member of its first Diaconate ; acknowledging with gratitude the wisdom with which you and your co-deacons guided its affairs in that early stage of its history. Nor do we forget the self-denial which prompted you to take charge of the Goodwin Street Mission, and we trust that as you were privileged to take a leading part in the commencement of that good work, you

may be spared to see its consummation and crown in the erection of the Church in Blackburn Road.

"In mission work at Daubhill and Tyldesley, resulting in the formation of Churches, and the building of places of worship in both localities, you also took an active part, thus setting us an example of good and faithful service well worthy of our imitation. Till health failed her, the late Mrs. Lever was also a zealous worker, and continued to be a well-wisher to these various schemes of usefulness. Her removal from amongst us has caused us unfeigned sorrow, and we desire to link her name with yours in this expression of our love and esteem. For you, and all the members of your family, we wish every happiness. May you, in looking back on a long life well spent, derive much satisfaction, and, in looking forward, feel assured of the approval of the Master whose you are, and whom you serve.—Signed on behalf of the Church and Congregation, Joseph Taylor, Deacon; Benjamin Cole, Deacon and Sunday School Superintendent; Henry S. Sturges, Deacon and Church Secretary; David Ottewill, Deacon and Treasurer; James Bromiley, Deacon; William Barlow, Deacon and Organist; John Hetherington, Pew Rent Secretary and Warden; Thomas Blundell, Churchwarden; Joseph Thornley, Secretary of Sunday School; John Hulme, Sunday School Treasurer; J. B. Parkinson, Deacon; James Atherton, Deacon; William Steele, Deacon; Frederick Cooper, Deacon and Sunday School Superintendent; Fred Isherwood, Deacon; Charles E. Smethurst, Choirmaster; James Nicholson, Secretary General Committee; John Davenport, Churchwarden; Reginald Kirk, Sunday School Secretary; J. F. Warbrick, Superintendent Kay Street Mission."

Mr. Lever, on rising to respond, had a most warm and cordial reception. After thanking them for their presentation, he said he was not worthy of it, but his heart was full of gratitude for all the kindnesses he had received at their hands. He assured them that though he was leaving the town, he was not going to separate himself from them. His feeling was to continue a member with them as long as he lived.

In a pleasing conversational style, Mr. Lever then referred to the experiences of a long life since he was born in Wood Street in 1809, and when in his early childhood there was not a house, but nothing but fields from the Commercial Hotel to beyond Trinity Church.

He remembered the illumination of the town at the Battle of Waterloo, and the banishment of Napoleon to Elba. Many personal reminiscences were given as to his commercial and business life, and his religious life at Mr. Roby's Church, at Manchester, the Church which sent out Dr. Moffat, the missionary, and which he joined in 1835. On coming back to Bolton he joined Duke's Alley, and sat under the ministrations of the Rev. R. Brown, the Rev. B. Backhouse,

and the Rev. W. H. Davison, the last named of whom he described as a practical leader, and possessed of sound judgment, and knowledge, and indomitable perseverance. He narrated in a pleasant, chatty way the circumstances which led up to the building of St. George's Road Church, and the difficulties which had to be overcome. Then the interest at Tyldesley was started, followed by one at Daubhill, and lastly at Blackbank Street, congratulating the friends there on the fact that there were brighter days in store. As to the future, he hoped that the Church would go on and prosper. He urged the members to have faith in God and His work. He counselled the young men especially never to be tempted to do a wrong thing even for business sake, it was better never to speak at all than to tell a lie about a thing, and he urged them to a belief in prayer, of the efficacy of which he gave two notable instances in his own early experiences. He again thanked them for the expression of their kind feeling towards him.

Mr. R. Shaw, Rivington, an old co-worker with Mr. Lever, joined in the general expression of esteem, and was followed by Mr. W. H. Lever, who, speaking for his brother and himself, said that whatever measure of success had come to them, had come, not from their own efforts or ability, but entirely from the training they had received and the good example set them by their father and mother.

Referring to the Church on Blackburn Road, which he and his brother were building, he said they were led to it by the desire of their friends to see a Church built on that spot. His brother-in-law, Mr. W. F. Tillotson, one of the men who, after his father, probably exercised the greatest influence on his career—had for one of his ideals the sight of a church built there, and with these influences around them they were guided in what they were doing. He hoped they would like the style of the building; some thought that a Gothic style of architecture was not suitable for a Dissenting place of worship, but they must remember that the style had been evolved hundreds of years ago by far greater minds than their own as the most suitable for places of worship, which should, after all, be different to that of public buildings or private dwellings. He humorously remarked that he had



The late MR. JAMES LEVER.

come to the conclusion, after travelling all over the world, that Bolton was the healthiest town to live and work in, being 400 feet above the level of the sea, and in conclusion he thanked them for their kind expression of goodwill towards his father. Mr. James Atherton, Mr. J. Thomasson, and Mr. H. S. Sturges, as "old boys" of Duke's Alley Sunday School, spoke reminiscently of the early struggles of the Church, and Mr. Scrimgeour, of Farnworth, also an old Duke's Alley scholar, wished Mr. Lever and the Church at St. George's Road, every success. The choir, under Mr. C. E. Smethurst, conductor, and Mr. W. Barlow, pianist, gave a selection: "I waited for the Lord," from Mendelssohn's "Hymn of Praise," with Miss Partington and Miss Stevenson as duettists, and "Auld Lang Syne," and the Benediction, brought to a close an evening which was one of the most memorable in the history of the Church.

Mr. James Lever has served the Church in all the capacities it was possible for him to work in—as Member of the Church, as Treasurer in 1855, as Deacon in charge of missionary work, and on the various committees that have from time to time been appointed in connection with the varying needs of our work for the spread of the Gospel locally. He was a grand man of appeal, and consistent in all his doings. His love for the Church and its work was apparent at all times, and he was unfailing in his attendance at its services. May we have more like him as the cause goes on and spreads throughout our district. Humble and God fearing, he exerted an influence for good that was all compelling and helpful to those who came in contact with him. It is therefore with sorrow that we record his death, on May 26th, 1897. He had lived and laboured so long for the Master that at last, when the call came, he was as "a shock of ripe corn." His life was one that had passed through the seasons to a rich and golden harvest, and God's great reaper found him ready when he came.

In the little village churchyard at Thornton, Cheshire, the mortal remains of Mr. James Lever were laid to rest. Around his grave stood his children and grandchildren, sustained and blessed by the memory of a noble life; the villagers who, with uncovered heads, had slowly followed to pay in simple manner their last respects to one they had learned to

love ; and also many of his old comrades, who in years gone by had kept the faith, and by his side had fought the fight for the honour and glory of the Church and the cause he so dearly loved. Quiet, simple, and reverent, were the last rites over that still form of a good soldier of Jesus Christ. Many a lip quivered, and the tear stood in many an eye, as they took a last look and then turned to go, leaving the father, friend, and warrior to sleep in peace.

For more than half a century Mr. Lever was a member of St. George's Road Church, joining himself thereto at Duke's Alley, under the ministry of the Rev. R. Brown. The date given in the old Church Book is July 2nd, 1845.

His sympathies were large, and went out to all Christian Churches, but his help was chiefly directed to those of his own order.

Associated with his name, next, no doubt to St. George's Road, for which Church he was always ready to spend and be spent, will be Blackburn Road, built by his two sons, for their father's sake.

He was a Nonconformist by conviction. In character, he was unassuming ; in habits, simple ; in speech, hearty and sincere ; never losing sight of or forgetting old friends ; he was, in fact, "unspoiled by success."

Behind him he leaves a name that stands on the list of a large number of names of sainted men and women, who have lived and laboured at St. George's Road, to be kept as long as the Church shall last, as an inspiration to those who are now living and working, and as a noble heritage to be handed down to those who are yet to come as workers in His vineyard.

CHAPTER XXI.

The Rev. GEORGE BARBER.

Student Days—Assistant to Dr. Dale—Call to Bolton—Its Acceptance—Induction Services—Recognition Services—Letter of Appreciation—Call to Liscard—Letter to Church—His Work Here—Farewell Presentations—Work at Liscard.

In the year 1887, Mr. Barber commenced his successful career as a student at Lancashire Independent College, and carried off the Lewis Scholarship at the commencement of his theological course, also coming out in the First Division of the *Senatus Academicus*. He looked up to Dr. Caleb Scott, the Principal, with veneration, and he in turn honoured him with his personal friendship.

As a preacher, Mr. Barber's services were much in request while he was yet a student ; also when the end of his course approached, Southport, Tynemouth, and Idle, near Bradford, invited him to become their Pastor, but the Head of the Church reserved him for greater responsibilities and service.

The health of Dr. R. W. Dale, of Birmingham, was beginning to give way, and his people began to have fears that his mighty energies might not be proof against incessant labours. They therefore decided to appoint a younger man to share his burden as Assistant Pastor. Many men were tried, but it was not till Mr. Barber came, backed by affectionate commendations of the Principal of Lancashire College, that all the circumstances seemed to point him out as the man for the post. Dr. Dale took to him at once, and with a loyalty and love that did him honour, stood by his assistant to the last. His momentous ministry at Carr's Lane opened in May, 1892, and closed early in 1895. The work here meant much responsibility and much anxiety for the young pastor, and also a splendid start in life through association, intimate and sacred, with a born leader of men.

After some months of work together, Dr. Dale recorded his impressions of Mr. Barber in a letter to Dr. Guinness Rogers, in which he says :—

“ You will be glad to hear that my curate continues to be a great comfort to me. He is very affectionate and frank and modest. Sometimes he preaches very well ; but even a poor

sermon of his seems to interest and charm large numbers of people. One great thing is that his visits to the people are greatly valued ; he is so pleasant. Another is that he is creating a very considerable stir among the young people."

Mr. Barber has printed a beautiful account of his chief, which forms one of the most fascinating chapters in Mr. A. W. W. Dale's biography of his father.

The labours of our friend at Carr's Lane, tested by heavy and unexpected demands through Dr. Dale's increasing weakness, were held in high appreciation, not only by the Church, but by his brethren in the ministry also. His style and pulpit manner remind one of the quiet masculinity of his former chief, and an illusion used in his prayers, uttered with a wealth of tenderness and feeling, often betokens a consciousness of the influence born in service at Carr's Lane, and lasting bright and strong up to the present time.

On December 21st, 1894, the Deacons took into consideration the recommendation from the Advisory Committee, with regard to the Rev. George Barber, of Birmingham, who had supplied the pulpit on two occasions, and made a wide and favourable impression. The voting being satisfactory, it was agreed that the meeting of the Church, and also of Church and Congregation, be held on Thursday, January 3rd, 1895. A call was forwarded to Mr. Barber, and accepted by him, the Advisory Committee meeting together on February 28th, to have a cup of tea together and give a welcome to the new Pastor, who was also present.

On February 28th, 1895, a special meeting of the Deacons was held, with Mr. Barber in the chair. Conversation took place in reference to Induction and Recognition Services, and it was ultimately agreed that a Social Evening in connection with the Church and Congregation be held on Wednesday, March 13th, and that the services be held as early as the arrangements could be made to suit the convenience of the Ministers taking part. The arrangements for these meetings were left to the Pastor, Secretary, and Mr. F. Cooper.

The Induction Services in connection with the settlement of the Rev. George Barber, took place on Wednesday, April 10th, 1895, the Rev. Dr. Berry, of Wolverhampton, a former pastor, occupied the pulpit, and preached on "The Christian Church—its equipments, its ideals and aims." The con-



REV. GEORGE BARBER.

gregation then sang the hymn, "We bid thee welcome in the name of Jesus, our exalted Head," and the new pastor then ascended the pulpit, and asked for their prayers on his behalf. He had come, he trusted, in the fulness of the Gospel of the blessed Christ, and whilst he stood in the pulpit he should preach the glorious Gospel of the blessed God.

The recognition of the Rev. George Barber took place on Thursday, April 18th, 1895, the Rev. H. W. Turner, B.A., presiding at the meeting in the Church, and was supported by most of the Nonconformist Ministers of the town and district. After singing a hymn, prayer was offered by the Rev. Dr. Johnstone, of the Presbyterian Church, Bowker's Row.

Mr. Sturges, Secretary to the Deacons, stated the circumstances which led up to the acceptance by Mr. Barber of the "call" to St. George's Road.

The Rev. H. W. Turner then said that on behalf of Church Representatives present, they cordially accepted the invitation to be present to rejoice with them in the settlement of their pastor. That service was a recognition of the fact that their hands were strengthened by the cordial fellowship of the Churches, who were in partnership with that Church in doing God's work. His brethren came there to tell Mr. Barber that there was a place waiting for him in their affection and brotherly love, a feeling which his predecessor did so much to foster. Voicing the sentiments of the Congregational Ministers of the town, he said they were passing through an important stage of their history. They were realising their responsibility to the town and district. The spirit of extension was in the air, and the result would depend upon their standing shoulder to shoulder and uniting in friendly co-operation. He rejoiced that the gap which had existed in the town for some two years was now being filled.

In giving Mr. Barber the right hand of fellowship on behalf of the Congregational Churches and Ministers, he hoped that in his work he might have increasing joy and success, and that he might be a source of blessing to the people among whom he had come to labour.

The Rev. T. H. Horrell, Superintendent of the Bridge Street Wesleyan Circuit, rejoiced in the steps being taken in the direction of real unity of the Evangelical Churches, one

of the features of the present age. The Wesleyan Ministers of the town welcomed Mr. Barber as a brother, for the record he bore, and for his acquaintance and friendship with a great and good man who was prized and loved by all the Churches, and whose influence in the Churches would last as long as the globe lasted—Dr. Dale, of Birmingham. Mr. Barber and himself, so far as their Churches were concerned, were neighbours. He hoped they would work shoulder to shoulder together as far as God gave them strength and opportunity, for the upbuilding of God's kingdom.

The Rev. W. Hewgill, M.A., of Farnworth, welcomed Mr. Barber on behalf of the Churches outside Bolton. That Church had always helped greatly in the work of the Congregational Union, and he trusted Mr. Barber would take an active part in the work of that Union. The closer Ministers and Churches came together in fellowship and work, the better it would be for the prosperity of the individual churches and the glory of God.

The Rev. C. Cole (Claremont Baptist), tendered a hearty and sincere welcome to Mr. Barber on behalf of the Baptist Churches of the town and district, and the Rev. W. Barrett (Primitive Methodist), representing the branches of the Methodist Churches other than Wesleyan, also welcomed the new pastor, and assured him he would find a sphere for all his life's energy in the town.

The Rev. George Barber, in rising to respond, was warmly received. He thanked the speakers for all the generous and kind things said about him, and was glad to know that there was a warm relationship existing amongst the Nonconformist Ministers, and he said he should try to make that fellowship a real joy. There was always the purification of life and character to be done, and this was the true strength of their Congregationalism.

The following letter of appreciation shows how well Mr. Barber fulfilled his duties as Pastor in connection with our Church :—

“ Mr. Barber—Dear Sir,

“ At a Deacons' Meeting held on Wednesday, February 28th, the Deacons desired me, on this occasion, to read to you a Resolution moved by Mr. David Ottewill, the Church Treasurer, and seconded by Mr. Thomas Picken, one of the Sunday School Superintendents, and carried unanimously.

“ ‘ ‘ That, the Deacons desire to place on record their high appreciation of the valuable services rendered to this Church by the Reverend George Barber during the past eleven years of his ministry. He has included in his sympathy and labours the children, the young men and young women and the adults of the Church and Congregation. The Deacons recognise the good work done by his Sunday Evening Special Services and Lectures to Young People, to the Working Classes, and to the People and the Public generally of this town.

“ ‘ ‘ They are assured that much good has been derived by those attending the Lectures.

“ ‘ ‘ They further congratulate him on the commencement of the twelfth year of his ministry at St. George’s Road Church, trusting many years of usefulness are before him amongst us, and praying that Divine Wisdom may still guide him and Divine Love be his strength.’ ’

“ WM. HUTCHINSON, Secretary.”

“ Deacons’ Vestry, February 28th, 1906.”

On April 24th, 1910, the Secretary intimated that the Rev. George Barber had received a most hearty and unanimous invitation from the Congregational Church at Liscard. After talking this over, the Deacons decided to take the Church and Congregation into their confidence, and call a meeting of them for Wednesday, April 27th, to consider the matter. This was duly called, the Deacons meeting first, when, after much debate, they resolved to recommend to the meeting the following resolution for their consideration :—

“ We, the Members and Congregation of St. George’s Road Congregational Church, Bolton, acknowledge our gratitude to Almighty God for the blessings received through the ministry of our Pastor, the Rev. George Barber. We earnestly desire to assure him of our continued love and devotion, and pray that he may be rightly guided in his decision.”

On April 29th, a letter from the Pastor was read to the Church and Congregation, as follows :—

“ My Dear Friends,

“ I wish to thank you most heartily for the cordial resolution which you so kindly passed at your meeting on Wednesday evening last, in which you express your loyalty and affection towards me, and the earnest wish that I might see my way still to remain as your minister. I confess on receiving it, I was greatly touched, but felt after all that it was only in accord with all the kindness which you have unfailingly shown all through the 14 years I have been with you.

“ As regards the call to Liscard, I can only say it came to me quite unsought, and came with such unanimity and enthusiasm that no alternative was left but that I should consider it, and consider it seriously. The prospects of usefulness which it affords are very great indeed, and the unity of the Church is most beautiful, and the people themselves so earnest in all Christian work, that the invitation is no common one. After long and earnest consideration on my part I have decided

to accept it, feeling assured that this is the Divine Will concerning me. I can never thank you adequately for all you have been to me, and done for me, and I shall ever look back with joy and gratitude to the years in which I have been honoured by being your Minister.

"With affectionate regards,

"I am,

"Yours sincerely,

"GEORGE BARBER."

One who has been intimately associated with the life and work of the Church through many years, wrote of him thus :—

"Since Mr. Barber came amongst us our finances have considerably improved. We have not only more seat-holders, but a much larger congregation. We have also had regular additions to our Church. His preaching and his genial social spirit won for him such appreciation that we have been able to carry out many improvements. We have put in our Church and School the electric light, beautified both places, erecting a new heating apparatus, enlarged our pulpit, and secured a new hymn-book free to all the congregation—and all these are paid for, and to him we are very much indebted for them. He has not only encouraged the people to give, but gives liberally himself."

We therefore recognise that Mr. Barber had abilities of no mean order, and could exert them to the best advantage when so disposed.

After a 15 years' pastorate at St. George's Road Congregational Church, the Rev. George Barber undertook the ministry of the Congregational Church at Liscard, and a gathering of the Church and Congregation took place in the schoolroom for the purpose of bidding him farewell, and wishing him Godspeed in his new sphere of labour in the Wallasey peninsula. There was a large attendance, presided over by Mr. W. Hutchinson, and amongst those present were Messrs. W. Barlow, T. Picken, J. Candlish, R. Kirk, J. Hulme, W. I. Bromiley, T. Warburton, Dr. Parker, J. Lever Tillotson, H. A. Barnes, B.A., J. Sefton, and others.

After the singing of the hymn, "All People that on Earth do Dwell," the Chairman said they had met to express their Christian affection for and admiration of Mr. Barber. All observers must have noted Mr. Barber's growth of mentality, clearer exposition, literary skill, and more spiritual insight, and more powerful declaration of what he deemed to be the truth and his message to his people. Personally he wished to speak of Mr. Barber as one who had no narrowness and no cant. He was very sorry to lose Mr. Barber, but he congratulated

lated him on his promise of earnest labour, and upon going among large-hearted and wise-minded friends. He trusted his labours would be both gladsome and fruitful to him.

Mr. W. Barlow spoke on behalf of the Church, remarking that they looked back with glad hearts upon Mr. Barber's ministry, and the wonderful growth of friendship, unity, and spiritual tone of the Church. He referred to the wonderful help, tenderness, and strength Mr. Barber had shown in visiting the bereaved. He also spoke of the increased membership of the Church, and the high level of spirituality attained.

Mr. T. Picken, on behalf of the Sunday School, expressed the heartfelt thanks of the teachers and scholars for Mr. Barber's kind and loving association with them. He alluded to the close touch Mr. Barber had with the young men of the Institute, the series of addresses he had given and the missions he had conducted, and the unprecedented number of scholars added to the Church. The Church at Liscard would, he was sure, find in Mr. Barber a most sincere, kind-hearted, and earnest friend and helper. They all hoped in his new sphere he would enjoy all the happiness he had enjoyed in Bolton, only more intensified.

Mr. Calder spoke on behalf of Kay Street Mission, expressing gratitude for the help he had given the Mission workers, and Mr. R. Kirk for the Institute Members, who, he said, were under a deep debt of gratitude to Mr. Barber. Had it not been for his help at the initiation the Institute would never have been started. Many pleasant hours had been spent with him at the Institute, for he had been to them as a brother and comrade in arms. He expressed his thankfulness for the addresses that had been given to young men, and which had been most helpful in their influence on his hearers.

Mr. J. Hetherington then presented to Mr. Barber, on behalf of the Church and Congregation, a solid silver tea and coffee service and solid silver tray, and also a travelling bag. The inscription on the silver tray was as follows :—

“St. George's Road Congregational Church, Bolton.
Presented to the Rev. George Barber by the members of the
Church and Congregation as a token of love and esteem at the
termination of his pastorate extending over 15 years. June
14th, 1910.”

Mr. Hetherington spoke pleasantly and reminiscently of the Church's history during Mr. Barber's pastorate. The sales of work promoted by the Church culminating in the last bazaar, when over a thousand pounds were raised, testified to the love and esteem of St. George's Road people, who would not have worked as loyally as they had done without that love and esteem. He sincerely hoped Mr. Barber's blessings in the future would be largely increased, and trusted that when he looked upon the presents given him his heart would warm to his old friends at St. George's Road.

Mr. Barber returned thanks for their gifts, but especially appreciated the knowledge that he still had a high place in their thoughts and hearts. He referred to the kindnesses he had received from the speakers that evening, and he looked forward to the work the Church would do under the leadership of men like Mr. Hutchinson, Mr. Picken, Mr. Barlow, Mr. Hetherington, and Mr. Kirk. In concluding a speech full of gratitude for all that had been said and done, he said : " Thank you very much ; may God bless you as a Church, and may He send you in good time a better man than I have ever been, and may the future of this Church be far more glorious than in the past."

During the evening the choir sang pleasing selections, under the leadership of Mr. J. Thornley, and refreshments were served.

Mr. Barber is now the Mayor's Chaplain for the second time in three years, and both Mayors attend Divine Service in the morning at his Church. He is also a member of the Library Committee and Book Committee, the Vice-President of the Free Church Council, and Vice-President of the British and Foreign Bible Society's Auxiliary.

As the popular minister of Rake Lane Congregational Church, Mr. Barber has a passion for preaching. When so engaged the whole man—body, soul, and spirit—is in travail to deliver the message. All the powers of an alert body, a clean-shaven, intellectual face with mobile features and massive brow, a sonorous, flexible voice, accompanied in speaking by vehement action when a point is being driven home—all these are employed and occasionally at utmost tension. It is true oratory of the natural school.

A very notable feature of his evening sermons is the frequency of them being addressed to young men and women, and on such occasions the attendance is always large, and not infrequently so large as to severely test the seating accommodation at his Church. There are no vacant sittings in his new sphere, and therefore it is not surprising that early attendance is essential.

His sermons, whether spoken to the Mayor and Corporation, or on whatever other occasion, are always admirably fitting, and it is therefore pleasing to us to know that another of our respected pastors is carrying out the working records of our early men in so fitting a fashion.

CHAPTER XXII.

A BENEFACTOR OF THE CHURCH.

Fresh Installations—Grand Bazaar in the Albert Hall—Clearance of Debt—Legacy Lost—Death of Mr. James Bromiley—His Legacy—Young People's Guild.

At the Annual Meeting of the Church and Congregation, held in the Lecture Hall, on Wednesday evening, February 12th, 1896, the question of installing electric light was discussed, but was eventually left over for the decision of a special meeting, which was called on March 11th, 1896, when a resolution of the Deacons recommending that the beautifying, lighting, and heating of the Church, together with the adoption of the New Hymn Book and Chant and Anthem Book be proceeded with, during this year, and that a Sub-Committee be appointed to formulate a scheme for a New School, with power to employ an Architect to advise thereon and report to a further meeting, was adopted.

During August and September, 1896, new heating apparatus was put in, and the electric light installed, the Church being also decorated. At the Re-opening Services, the sermons were preached by the Rev. George Barber, and the collections amounted to £420.

At the Deacons' Meeting on January 27th, 1897, the Rev. George Barber moved "that the best thanks of the meeting

be conveyed to Mr. and Mrs. Blundell for the beautiful and chaste Reading Desk which they had presented to the Church." [On it is inscribed :—"This Reading Desk was presented to the Church by Mr. and Mrs. T. Blundell, Christmas, 1896."] This was seconded by Mr. Hetherington, and carried unanimously.

Chaste and beautiful as is the appearance of our Albert Hall on ordinary occasions, its elegance was enhanced by the garb of floral grace which it donned for the grand bazaar which was held on behalf of objects connected with the Congregational Church, St. George's Road, on Wednesday, November 24th, 1897.

The Church had been newly decorated with an elaboration of detail and display of taste which made the interior charmingly beautiful, the electric light had been installed, and the Church heated, and it was to meet these expenses, together with those rendered necessary by alterations proposed in the schoolroom, and the provision of new furniture, as well as the introduction of new hymn, chant, and anthem books for the Church, that the bazaar was held, the sum of £800 being required. For nearly two years past the ladies had held weekly sewing meetings, and worked with willing hearts and deft fingers to provide articles of beauty and utility for sale at the bazaar, the result being a collection of objects of interest, elegance, and usefulness, which was at once pleasing to look upon and creditable to the fair seamstresses who worked so long and well.

A glance round the Albert Hall showed the stalls, eight in number, bearing witness, with their wealth of useful articles of apparel, charming objects of art, and numerous specimens of industrial handicraft, to the hundreds of hours spent in willing service by the ladies as well as the male members of the Church, School, and Congregation.

The decorations of the stalls were in a style unique in the history of bazaars held previously in the hall. They were of a floral kind, each stall being embellished with designs representative of some one or other of fair Flora's gems.

The Flower Stall, which was situated to the left of the visitors as they entered the Hall, was a special feature of the bazaar. Pretty in architectural design, of miniature tent form,

it was one mass of natural floral beauty, rich in ivy and evergreens, and gay in a variety of lovely blooms and fruits, as though the choicest of Nature's gifts had been poured forth from her rich cornucopia. In the handbook the motto to the flower stall was the happy one, " If thou wouldest attain to the highest, go look upon a flower."

At the time fixed for the opening ceremony the hall was well filled, not only with members and friends of St. George's Road Church, but by many sympathising helpers from other places of worship in the town and neighbourhood. The Rev. G. Barber presided, and accompanying him on the platform were Lady Dobson (wife of Lieut.-Col. Sir Benjamin A. Dobson, J.P., Mayor of Bolton), and Lieutenant Benjamin Palin Dobson, their eldest son; Ald. W. Nicholson, J.P., Deputy Mayor; Messrs. J. B. Parkinson, H. S. Sturges, W. Steele, W. I. Bromiley, B. Cole, and J. Hulme, Deacons; the Revs. C. Cole (Claremont Baptist), and J. D. Thomas (Derby Street Congregational), and Mr. C. E. Smethurst, Secretary.

At the commencement of the proceedings the hymn, " Oh, God, our help in ages past," was sung to the tune " Evan," Mr. C. E. Smethurst, choirmaster of the Church, accompanying on the pianoforte. The Rev. C. Cole then offered prayer. The Rev. G. Barber next addressed the assembly, his duty being to give a very hearty welcome to Lady Dobson and Lieut. B. P. Dobson. They were proud to have them present with them.

A beautiful bouquet was presented to Lady Dobson by a daintily-dressed little girl, Miss Gertrude Crompton, and the Mayoress received the gift very gracefully. Lieut. Dobson then rose to open the bazaar. In the first place he said he must thank them heartily on behalf of the Mayoress for the splendid bouquet she had just received. He knew they would have a good reception, indeed, this was always the case on such occasions. As for bazaars, he thought they deserved all the money they made. They were an infinitely more delicate means of obtaining the necessary funds than going from house to house soliciting subscriptions. There was an enormous amount of work in connection with a bazaar which those who had not helped at one could not realise, and those who had helped could fully appreciate. He hoped

the unfortunate engineering dispute would not interfere with their success, but trusted that they would get even more than they required. This was the 19th week in Bolton and the 20th in London, and it was time both sides shook hands over the affair. It had caused a great amount of distress in the town. He trusted the patrons of the bazaar would forget any money they had lost through the dispute and that they would liberally support that effort. That was the first bazaar he had had the honour of opening. He was trying his best to fill his father's place, if not in bulk. (Laughter.) Again, on behalf of his mother and himself, he thanked them for the cordial reception, and he had pleasure in declaring the bazaar open.

Mr. C. E. Smethurst then proposed a hearty vote of thanks to the Mayoress and Lieut. Dobson, remarking that they were highly pleased to have had Lady Dobson's gracious presence, and the excellent speech of her son.

Mr. H. S. Sturges suitably seconded, and the vote was carried with acclamation.

The Rev. G. Barber, having asked the Mayoress and Lieut. Dobson to convey their regret at the Mayor's absence, intimated that the sales would now proceed, and he trusted they would be brisk, bright, and brotherly.

A letter had been received from Mr. G. Harwood, M.P., regretting his absence, and gratefully recognising the work which St. George's Road Congregational Church was doing.

Luncheon was provided in the Mayor's dining-room, and a tasteful table and appetising menu contributed to the comfort and enjoyment of the guests. The catering was in charge of the ladies at the Refreshment Stall.

The bazaar remained open until the Saturday night. On Thursday, at three o'clock, the opening ceremony was performed by Mr. H. T. Deakin, J.P., of Belmont; on Friday, Mr. Roger Duxbury opened it, and on Saturday the Rev. G. Barber performed the ceremony.

The Treasurer, Mr. D. Ottewill, reported on December 13th, 1897, that the net result of the bazaar which had recently been held, was the realisation of a sum of £1,107 16s. 8d., which cleared the debt.

On April 27th, 1898, the Secretary read a letter from Mr.

James A. Thomasson, intimating that the late Mr. John Davenport had left by his "Will" the sum of £100 towards a new School—provided the same were built within five years of his widow's decease. Mrs. Davenport died on March 29th, 1898, and as the new School did not eventuate within the stipulated time, this legacy was lost to us.

The collection of hymns compiled by the Rev. W. Hope Davison, which was used for so many years, was dispensed with in June, 1898. The book, which is now in use, is entitled "Worship Song," and is edited by W. Garrett Horder.

Our loss through death was heavy in 1898, eleven of our members passing away. One of that beloved little band of eleven was our dear friend and brother, Mr. James Bromiley, who had been a member with us for 33 years, and served in the respective offices of Pew Rent Collector, Churchwarden, and Deacon. It was a loving and faithful service he rendered whilst he lived, and in his death he did not fail to leave behind him something tangible as a remembrance of his connection with us.

Although for about eight years previously Mr. James Bromiley had been suffering from heart troubles which eventually compelled him to retire from business and take life quietly, his end was somewhat sudden on May 20th, 1898. His friends had been apprehensive for some time, but no one thought that his end was so near. More than once he had expressed the wish that, please God, he, when the time came, should like to pass away with the pains and fears of death unknown. That wish was granted, for death came to him as quietly as falling asleep.

On May 25th, 1898, the Deacons resolved that a letter of condolence should be sent by the Rev. George Barber to Mrs. James Bromiley, expressing their warm sympathy with her on the death of her husband, who for many years was an active worker and member of the Church, and also served as Deacon for several years.

On August 31st, Messrs. Parkinson, Ottewill and Sturges, were appointed to receive on behalf of Trustees, the legacy of £1,000 left by the late James Bromiley, the income of which is to be given to the several objects named in a Clause of his "Will," copy of which is deposited in the Church safe.

Mr. Bromiley was a member of St. George's Road Church, and that Church has never had a more loyal and affectionate son. A child of the Church, he inherited the riches of its traditions. His grandfather, Mr. John Bromiley, became a member of Duke's Alley in 1814, his father, Mr. Roger Bromiley, in 1840, and he himself, along with Mrs. Bromiley, became members in 1865, two years after the Church started in its new sphere of work.

It was a great happiness to him to be able to tell his friends that he remembered his father taking him to Duke's Alley Sunday School when he was five years old, and how from that time he seemed to grow into the life of the place.

For six years he served the Church as Deacon, and for a very much longer period as Churchwarden. Always of a retiring disposition, he was the last either to seek office or expect it ; but whenever the call for service came to him, and he saw clearly that it was his duty, no one could be more conscientious or faithful. Often, when to others it seemed unwise for him to be at his post, there he was ready and willing. How he loved the Church ! The very stones of the building seemed sacred to him, and when men love a Church so, how can they help but serve it ? To say that he was a generous supporter of St. George's Road but conveys part of what he did, for all Christian work, and especially all work associated with Congregationalism, was more or less supported and helped by him. The most beautiful thing in his life was his simple faith, which was so expressive of filial trust and confidence in the Divine providence and care. He grew even kinder, more patient and trustful, during his later years, and greatly rejoiced in God.

He left behind him generous legacies, and these will effectively serve to render his memory ever green among the Churches. Men and women of deep spirituality and ripe Christian character are always too few in number, and therefore we record his helpfulness and work amongst us with thankfulness.

The first Meeting in connection with the newly-formed Young People's Guild, was held in the large schoolroom on Wednesday, October 19th, 1898. The meeting took the form of a Social Evening, for which invitations had been



MR. D. OTTEWILL.



MR. H. S. STURGES.

issued to the young people of the Church and School of 16 years old and upwards. The large number who came in response to the cards sent out, showed a ready appreciation of the effort put forth, and a willingness to help in the work of the various societies for the benefit of which the Guild was formed. A happy spirit prevailed. During the evening the pastor spoke on the objects of the Guild, pointing out how it would strengthen the feeling of comradeship in Christian service amongst the members. Refreshments had been provided, and were handed round by members of the Girls' Guild.

CHAPTER XXIII.

RESIGNATIONS AND APPRECIATIONS.

H. S. Sturges's Resignation of Secretaryship—Mr. William Hutchinson Appointed—Mr. W. Steele—Gifts from Mr. Blundell—Mr. Clarke's Mission—Individual Cups Obtained—Mr. Hulme Treasurer—Gift of Miss Mason—Death of J. B. Parkinson—Resignation of Mr. Hutchinson—Mr. William Barlow Appointed—Resignations of Mr. D. Ottewill and Mr. Barlow—Mr. Reginald Kirk Appointed Secretary and Mr. John Sefton, Treasurer—Mr. C. Beswick Appointed Treasurer of Church Poor Fund—Mr. Hulme's Resignation in 1911—Discussing the Jubilee Celebrations—New School Scheme—Death of Mr. J. M. Horrocks and Mr. William Hutchinson.

On January 31st, 1900, a letter was read by the Rev. George Barber to the Deacons, which he had received from Mr. H. S. Sturges, who for seven years had held the office of Church Secretary, and for 31 years the office of Deacon, intimating his desire to retire. After discussion his resignation was accepted, and the Pastor instructed to convey the thanks of the Deacons to Mr. Sturges for so many years of faithful service and devoted interest to the cause of the Church. Mr. Sturges was transferred to Lee Chapel, Horwich, for five years during his period of service, and on his return to Bolton in November, 1887, was again elected as Deacon, and came into office at the beginning of 1888, his period running from 1868 to 1899 less the five years at Horwich.

In 1863, Mr. Sturges was appointed Co-secretary of the Sunday School, along with the late Mr. W. F. Tillotson, J.P.

This was done at a meeting in Duke's Alley Vestry, and both gentlemen acted at St. George's Road in that capacity. Mr. Sturges had, however, to resign owing to ill-health, just before his term of two years' service was completed. On March 28th, 1900, Mr. William Hutchinson agreed to become the Church Secretary in the place of Mr. Sturges, resigned.

Owing to his removal to Leeds, Mr. W. Steele resigned the office of Deacon of this Church on November 26th, 1900. Being present at this meeting when the letter was read, Mr. Steele alluded in a very warm manner to the kindness experienced by him. The Pastor then spoke at length of the great services Mr. Steele had rendered to the Church and the town, and expressed the sense of loss that would be felt by the Deacons and the Church. Mr. Parkinson, the oldest Deacon, spoke on behalf of the Diaconate, and voiced their regret at losing his services amongst them.

A number of the ladies of the Church were asked to form a committee to collect for a proposed Testimonial to Mr. Steele. At the same meeting the Pastor moved and Mr. Ottewill seconded a vote of thanks to Mr. Blundell for the new cushion to the pulpit desk—which was heartily agreed to by all.

On July 2nd, 1902, Mr. Blundell made an offer of a Communion Chair, which was gratefully accepted with thanks.

On September 2nd, 1903, the Rev. George Barber reported the engagement of Mr. Clarke to conduct a Mission in the beginning of the next year. It was resolved "that this Mission be from January 10th, to January 24th, 1904."

On February 1st, 1904, at a Deacons' Meeting, Mr. T. Picken moved, and Mr. J. Hulme seconded, "That the Deacons acknowledge with great joy and gratitude the many and great blessings which Almighty God has been pleased to give to the Church, School, and Mission, during the recent Mission conducted by Mr. George Clarke, when so many have been led to give themselves to Christ, not only in connection with our own Church, but with many other Churches in the Town. To God be all the Praise."

On October 31st, 1904, the Rev. George Barber called attention to a sample of Individual Cup and Tray for use at the Communion Services. It was concluded that the sample submitted, with some slight alteration, would be suitable.

The Secretary, Mr. Hutchinson, moved, and Mr. T. Edge seconded the resolution, "that Messrs. D. Ottewill and Mr. W. I. Bromiley be authorised to purchase ten trays complete and additional glass cups."

At the Deacons' Meeting held on March 28th, 1906, the Rev. George Barber moved a resolution that a Testimonial should be arranged for presentation to Mr. Parkinson, as an acknowledgment and appreciation of his many years of loyal service to the cause of Christ in this Church. This was seconded by Mr. J. Hulme and carried unanimously. A special vote of thanks for long and valuable services as Treasurer of the Church Poor Fund is also recorded. A social was arranged for, at which the Testimonial was presented.

On October 3rd, 1906, Mr. Parkinson was elected as Honorary Deacon for life.

On March 28th, 1906, Mr. J. Hulme was appointed as the Treasurer of the Church Poor Fund in lieu of Mr. J. B. Parkinson, who resigned that office.

On July 3rd, 1907, thanks were tendered to Miss Mason for the gift of a handsome flower stand to the Church.

On October 1st, 1907, the Secretary was instructed to write a letter to Miss Parkinson, expressing appreciation of Mr. J. B. Parkinson's long and faithful services to this Church, which were then terminated by his death on September 10th, 1907, and also to express the sympathy of the Deacons at this time of trial.

Mr. William Hutchinson resigned the office of Church Secretary owing to increasing years, and this resignation was accepted. His valedictory message was :—

" With groping hands and faltering feet,
We seek the path of duty,
We speed awhile, and then we meet
A cul-de-sac, sans beauty.
We backward trace our steps to find
Our former efforts wanting ;
No lack of will, or power, or mind,
But TIME lags after, panting."

Mr. Hutchinson served as Secretary from January, 1900, to December, 1907, and as Deacon from January 1st, 1899, to December 31st, 1907.

To fill the vacancy caused by the retirement of Mr. Hutchinson, the Rev. George Barber moved and Mr. D. Ottewill seconded the appointment of Mr. William Barlow as Secretary, which was carried unanimously, and he accepted this office at that time, the beginning of 1908.

The Members of the Church and Congregation had their Annual Party in the schoolroom on January 2nd, 1908, when a large company were present. At the after proceedings, the Rev. George Barber presented silver cake baskets, suitably inscribed, to Mr. Harold Barnes, B.A., and Mr. William Barlow, on behalf of the Deacons of the Church and a few friends. Mr. Barnes for several years acted as choirmaster, faithfully carrying out his promise to leave his own Church at Farnworth to be present at St. George's Road one service each Sunday. He has now relinquished the position, and the present was given as a souvenir of his connection with our Church.

Mr. Barlow's present was in acknowledgment of 20 years' excellent service as organist, and Mr. Barber spoke in very appreciative terms of the work of both gentlemen.

On April 20th, 1909, Mr. Barlow said that after considering the matter carefully, he had with much regret to announce his resignation of the office of Secretary to the Deacons and Church Secretary, owing to reasons of health and pressure of other work to which he was committed. He thanked the Minister and Deacons for their loyal help and great kindness and consideration. He was asked to continue in office, and consented to do so on the clear understanding that it was for a short time only.

On May 11th, 1910, Mr. Barlow, having again requested to be released from the Secretaryship of the Church, his resignation was accepted, and the following appointed a sub-committee to recommend a new Secretary :—Messrs. C. H. Beswick, W. Fletcher, R. Kirk, and Wm. Barlow.

Touching words of appreciation were spoken by the Pastor and Deacons respecting the mutual help received and rendered by Mr. Wm. Barlow.

On August 25th, 1910, it was decided to recommend to the Church that Mr. Edge be elected Honorary Deacon.

THE CHURCH MANUAL.

All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep His covenants and His testimonies.—PSALM xxv., 10.

This publication first started in 1878, with the above verse as the Motto, and is prefaced by the following remarks :—

“ The Manual which is now in your hands is the first number of a Church Calendar which it is proposed to publish annually in the month of January, and as early in that month as convenience will admit.

“ It is hoped that by means of this publication our members and friends will become better acquainted with those principles on which our Church is based, and according to which our procedure is regulated with the various branches of Christian work which are maintained among us, and with the history of effort and achievement in the several departments of our Church activity.

“ It is further hoped that the information and the hints supplied in this Manual, will cause both the way and the obligation to some form of Christian service to be seen in a clearer light by some of our friends. Better still if we can make it clear that to work in the spirit of Christ for the highest good of our fellows is a lofty privilege, bringing with it an intense joy.

“ We need the freshness and vigour of your new life : you, perhaps, would not be worse for the steady and directing influence of Church relations and duties. ‘ Come with us,’ and while we seek to do you good, you in turn will confer strength and blessing on us.”

Mr. John Hetherington joined St. George’s Road Congregational Church in January, 1873, and his first impressions were :—The excellent Church singing in which the people heartily joined ; the devout and earnest prayers of the Rev. W. H. Davison, and his excellent sermons ; good congregations regularly—very few “ half-timers ” ; the number of venerable grey heads at the ends of the pews—alas, now all gone—these inspired respect and reverence. All the people were very friendly and kindly disposed to strangers.

During the early years of Mr. Berry’s ministry he was appointed Pew Rent Secretary, and held this position for over 27 years, and was Churchwarden for 20 years during the

same time. On giving up church work the members of the Church and Congregation presented him with a silver tea and coffee service. On the tray is the following inscription :—

"St. George's Road Congregational Church, Bolton.
Presented to Mr. John Hetherington in grateful appreciation of
27 years' Faithful Service. 17th March, 1909."

Special thanks were also tendered him for preparing the Church Manuals and editing same for so long a period.

The first Manual was the production of Dr. Berry, and although it was intended to be issued every year, a pause came until the second one was issued in 1884, in Mr. Wolstenholme's time. This was edited by Mr. Hetherington, and he supervised the issue of the subsequent publications until two years ago. This is considered to be the best and most complete Manual circulating among Congregational Churches.

On December 1st, 1909, Mr. David Ottewill gave in his resignation as Treasurer after 35 years' service. This was accepted with regret, and a warm appreciation of his long, faithful, and very valuable services to this Church for so long a period, was fittingly expressed.

A silver tray and tea service was presented before this time to Mr. David Ottewill by the St. George's Road Church and Congregation in recognition of his 25 years' valuable services as Treasurer, when he had completed that term. The tray is dated :—"Bolton, January 2nd, 1900."

Beauty and utility were combined at the four days' bazaar opened on April 13th, 1910, in the Sunday School. The object of the bazaar was to raise funds to pay off the debt of £250 and for beautifying the Church, re-seating, general repairs, etc. The circular issued to the friends of the Church appealing for assistance in the movement stated : "The amount necessary for these purposes is about £600 to £700, but we are hoping to realise more than this, and so be able to hand over a good surplus to the treasurer towards our new school scheme, for which so many of our friends have been working."

The appearance of the schoolroom at the opening ceremony was one of great attractiveness and charm. The stalls, ten in number, were laden with objects both useful and ornamental, and the general scheme of colour, orange and green, added greatly to the beauty of the picture.

At the opening ceremony the schoolroom was crowded to excess. Amongst those present were the Rev. G. Barber, the Rev. W. Hope Davison, M.A., the Rev. J. Johnston, Messrs. J. Hulme, R. Cunliffe; W. I. Bromiley and R. Kirk, Treasurers; W. Barlow; A. Holt, Secretary; H. J. Robinson, H. A. Barnes, B.A., J. Ormrod, W. Hutchinson, J. W. Sefton, J. H. Smethurst, H. S. Atherton, T. Barlow, D. Ottewill, H. S. Sturges, C. H. Beswick, G. Guthrie, J. Nicholson, G. Clarkson, J. Taylor, C. V. Thompson, W. J. Candlish, and Counc. S. Partington. Mr. F. L. Tillotson, J.P., presided, and was accompanied by Mr. Miles F. Burrows, J.P., who had consented to open the bazaar. After singing the hymn, "O Lord of Heaven and Earth and Sea," Mr. J. Thornley accompanying at the harmonium, prayer was offered by the Rev. W. Hope Davison, and Mr. Bromiley, one of the treasurers, made a brief financial statement, explaining that the scheme for a new school would ultimately involve the Church in an expenditure of £7,000. During the last few weeks they had raised the amount required for the land, £1,000, and they were asking their friends to assist them to raise a second thousand. They intended to put up a new school of a thoroughly up-to-date character.

The Chairman, after expressing his pleasure at being present, said they were all proud of St. George's Road Congregational Church, which was to him his mother church. They were proud of the church's splendid ancestry and the good work done by some of her sons. They wished to make the Church as handsome as possible, and he congratulated the friends upon the adoption of a forward policy. He was glad to hear of the increased membership of the Church, which was a happy augury.

Mr. Burrows, in opening the bazaar, said the work the friends had in hand was typical of the way in which Christianity was being taught and recognised in these days. The doctrines taught by Christ in His day were in no sense altered now, but their reading was more fully extended, and they had come to the conclusion that religion was not merely for Sunday, but ought to be a daily observance. He commended the establishment of a Young Men's Institute, which would get them attached to the building, afterwards fond of the

Church, and ultimately active in its service. He expressed the opinion that they were too much in the habit of expecting everyone, working people included, to give to every movement which was started. It was impossible for the workingmen to do much in the way of supporting institutions. He sincerely hoped that their efforts in connection with that Church would tend to greater usefulness, and he concluded by declaring the bazaar open.

On the motion of the Rev. G. Barber, seconded by Mr. W. Barlow, a hearty vote of thanks was passed to Mr. Burrows and Mr. Tillotson, and the sales then proceeded.

This bazaar, when it closed on the Saturday evening, had proved a huge financial success, exceeding the most sanguine expectations of its promoters. It was hoped that £700 would be realised as a minimum, but very few expected the handsome sum of £1,015 10s. 0½d. would be the total result of the effort. At the close of the evening's sales, when the Pastor, the Rev. George Barber, announced the amount to the large assembly which crowded the schoolroom, there was great enthusiasm, and the proceedings closed with the Doxology.

On Sunday morning in the Congregational Church a thanksgiving service was held, prayer and praise alternating, the sermon being dispensed with. In a statement by the Pastor he expressed thanks for the generosity of all the contributors to, and workers at the bazaar, acknowledging the magnitude of the united effort of service and sacrifice. The bazaar, coupled with the subscriptions and donations previously made for the school extension scheme, was unprecedented in the history of the Church. Previously, it was on record, the sum of £1,700 was contributed at a special collection in the Church, but the present effort embraced not only the amount collected at the bazaar (£1,015), but sums given or promised for the school scheme and would make the unique amount of £2,500. Nor was the financial result the only thing to be considered and be thankful for. The spiritual growth of the Church had been great. The Church membership now numbered 100 more than when he accepted the pastorate of the Church 15 years ago, and this notwithstanding deaths and removals. The school was prosperous, and a large band of young men were being attached to the Church.

The resignation of Mr. John Hulme as Poor Fund Treasurer was accepted on November 1st, 1911, and sincere thanks tendered to him for his many years' service. Mr. Reginald Kirk accepted this office at this time.

On February 1st, 1912, Mr. William Barlow said he could not continue to hold the office of Church Secretary, and asked the Deacons to relieve him at an early date, as he found the pressure of work upon him was more than he could bear, and he feared a breakdown in health if he continued. The matter was considered at the next meeting, and a sub-committee appointed to deal with it, and on April 2nd, 1912, they recommended Mr. Reginald Kirk for this office. This received the unanimous support of the Deacons, who thereupon elected him.

It was understood that Mr. Kirk was to be freed from the office of Treasurer, which latter office Mr. John W. Sefton was asked to fill, he in turn to be relieved from the office of Secretary to the Finance Committee. At the Church Meeting held on May 23rd, 1912, these appointments were confirmed, and Mr. C. H. Beswick appointed as Treasurer of the Church Poor Fund.

Mr. Arthur Tyas Cooper now acts as the Secretary to the Finance Committee, taking over the office from Mr. Sefton in September, 1912.

The matter of celebrating the Jubilee of the Opening of the Church was discussed at the Deacons' Meeting on August 21st, 1912, and it was considered advisable to hold special services. This matter came up again on September 5th, when it was resolved that the Secretary write to the Secretary of the New School Scheme Fund, as follows:—"That having regard to further Jubilee Celebrations of the Church, the Deacons would like to be informed as to the steps which are being taken with the New School Scheme, they being particularly desirous that something definite should be done in view of the Church Jubilee."

A statement from the Treasurer and Secretary of the New School Scheme, reporting progress, was read on October 25th, 1912, to the Deacons. The amount promised and in hand was £2,428, and the request for Mr. A. Holt or Mr. F. Alcott to speak on this matter at the social of the Church and Congregation on the following Wednesday, was acceded to.

The Jubilee gathering was fixed for Thursday, April 3rd, 1913.

The St. George's Road Church sustained two severe losses by death during 1912. Mr. J. M. Horrocks was a Sunday School Teacher, an active member of the Finance Committee, and as a Churchwarden did much to maintain and improve the Church buildings. Work of this character is not easily done, but it is important. Mr. Horrocks did faithfully all he put his hand to. He died in the prime of life after a long and painful illness. The sympathy of the whole Church is with his widow and daughter.

Mr. Hutchinson was more advanced in years, and failing health forced him some time ago to lay down his work as Deacon and Secretary of the Church. He was respected by all; his relatives have the kindest thoughts of the Church in their bereavement. The St. George's Road Church is the poorer for the loss of these, her two servants, but she is the richer for evermore by the memory of their faithful service, cheerfully given.

CHAPTER XXIV.

The Rev. HOWARD MUDIE, B.D.

Popularity—His Call to St. George's Road Church—Sketch of His Career—Unanimity of Call—Letter of Acceptance—Commencement of Ministry—Recognition Service.

The present minister is rapidly making a name for himself locally, and there are few Churches in our neighbourhood that have not enjoyed the advantage of his services, and none to whom he is unknown, although he has, comparatively speaking, been but a short time in Bolton. Mr. Mudie's acceptance of the pastorate, and the events leading up to it are as follows:—

On May 7th, 1911, it was agreed by the unanimous vote of the Deacons, by ballot, to recommend to the Church, "That the Rev. Howard Mudie, B.D., of Stoke Newington, be invited to become Pastor of this Church."

This was followed by a meeting in the Congregational Church Lecture Hall, St. George's Road, on May 11th, 1911,



REV. HOWARD MUDIE, B.D.

121 being present, to receive a report from the Advisory Committee on the question of the pastorate vacant since the resignation of the Rev. George Barber, who left Bolton for Liscard. Mr. William Barlow presided, and Mr. Garn submitted the report of the committee.

Mr. Mudie, who preached on two Sundays at St. George's Road, created a most favourable impression on the Church and Congregation, and the utmost unanimity prevailed as to the advisability of offering him the pastorate. Inquiries were made, and the following facts were elicited with regard to Mr. Mudie. He is a native of Manchester, and left England in 1886 for Boston, U.S.A. He travelled across the States to California, and entered the Pacific Theological Seminary, Berkeley, where he graduated B.D. After pastorates in California and Minnesota, he travelled in Australia, Palestine, and Egypt, and became Assistant Pastor to the Church of Christ (Congregational) in Springfield, Mass. After a year and nine months he left, and in 1904 became Pastor of the Payson Memorial Church, Portland, Maine, where he stayed 3½ years, leaving in consequence of the opposition manifested to his desire to introduce institutional work at the Church, owing to the changing need of the constituency, and in order to meet the social requirements of the young people of the neighbourhood. This Church is the mother Church of all the Congregational Churches in the city, and the testimonials concerning his work here show that both he and Mrs. Mudie worked unsparingly for the good of the Church.

In May, 1908, he, with his family, sailed for England, and became the Pastor of the Raleigh Memorial Congregational Church at Stoke Newington, which increased 100 in church membership during his two years' pastorate. Mr. W. I. Bromiley, Mr. T. Picken, Mr. J. Nicholson, and Mr. A. E. Holt spoke in favour of the resolution to invite Mr. Mudie, reference being made to his forceful and expository pulpit utterances, his deep spiritual convictions, his enthusiasm for humanity, his work in the Sunday School, his brotherly approachableness, and his public influence in the community in which he dwelt. The highest references and recommendations had been received from his first Pastor, the Rev. J. McDougall, of Manchester, and ministers and others who had known him in his pastorates

in America and in England. When the vote, by ballot, was taken, it was found that there were 121, the full number present, who had voted "Yes," and not a single negative.

An adjournment was then made to the Church, where a combined meeting of the Church and Congregation was held, presided over by Mr. W. Hutchinson. The Advisory Committee's report was again submitted, and speeches delivered by the Chairman, Messrs. Bromiley, R. Kirk, J. Hetherington, J. W. Sefton, and C. E. Garn, the last-named giving a message from the Mayor (Ald. J. T. Cooper), who had been called away to London on Corporation business, and who spoke highly of Mr. Mudie's qualities as a preacher and a man. On a vote being taken the same unanimity which characterised the previous meeting was displayed, 179 voting in favour of the call to Mr. Mudie and not one against.

A call was therefore forwarded to Mr. Mudie on May 11th, 1911, and this was signed on behalf of the Church by William Barlow, as Secretary, C. H. Beswick, W. I. Bromiley, R. Cunliffe, W. Fletcher, C. E. Garn, R. Hargreaves, J. Hulme, Reginald Kirk, James Nicholson, Jr., T. Picken, and H. Warburton.

The following letter in reply to this was read in the Church by Mr. William Barlow, Secretary to the Deacons and Church Secretary :—

" Stoke Newington, N.,
" June 2nd, 1911.

" To the Deacons of St. George's Road Congregational Church.

" My Dear Brethren,

" Your letter of May 11th, sent me by Mr. Barlow, your secretary, and in which you call me to your Church as minister, reached me in due time. For three weeks I have had the same constantly before me, and in dealing with it I have sought earnestly for light and help both from God and man. I need scarcely tell you that the remarkable unanimity and the spirit of the call have both deeply impressed me. No minister can look upon such a call without having deep and sober thoughts. I know that I have kept you waiting for some reply possibly longer than I had any right to do. But you will all believe me when I say that the sole motive for any delay was simply that I might be sure that in obeying your call I was following His will. I believe that now I can speak the final, and as I have earnestly prayed that it might be the right word, the word 'Yes.' I will come among you to be your minister in holy things, and so far as I can, by God's good help, I will seek to make Jesus great and attractive to the men and women of your Church and town. My heart goes out to each and all of you in deepest gratitude; and to all the people, old and young, of the

Church and Congregation I send, along with Mrs. Mudie and our three girls, our united, deep, sincere good wishes, and Christian love.

“ I am, dear brethren,
“ Yours faithfully,
“ HOWARD MUDIE.”

The new Pastor commenced his ministry at St. George's Road on July 16th, 1911, being welcomed both morning and evening by large congregations. The highly favourable impression which Mr. Mudie created on his previous visits to Bolton, and which led to his singularly unanimous call to the pastorate, was deepened on his first appearance in his new sphere. His earnest manner, the soulful intensity of his message as a Christian minister, and his evident longing that every Church should be filled with religious zeal for the benefit of humanity at large, were made strikingly manifest in his first sermon as Pastor of the Church. Mr. Mudie concluded this with the following:—“ My own profound prayer for this Church at St. George's Road, and for all other Churches who call Jesus ‘ Lord,’ is that they may become daily and increasingly the Lord’s own most holy sanctuary, where holy men and women may dwell with God in sweet and hallowed communion.”

In the line of succession of ministers at St. George's Road Church, the Rev. Howard Mudie stands the fifth, his recognition service taking place on Wednesday, September 11th, 1911. Having had experience on both sides of the Atlantic, he is regarded as having the manifold qualifications expected of a St. George's Road Pastor. The service was not a Church affair merely, nor even denominational. The Rev. W. J. Collier, M.A., was the Chairman, representing a daughter church, and also as President of the Bolton and District Congregational Council; or, as he put it in his happy opening address, he was “ master of the household on this most interesting occasion, on a platform that has been the quarter-deck of many great leaders of Congregationalism in Bolton.”

Prayer was offered by the Rev. M. Johnes, and the Chairman then extended a welcome to friends from other Churches, and recalled that that Church had made a mark in the Christian work and service of this town.

Mr. Collier formally conveyed to the new Pastor the greetings of the District Council.

Pastors of other Churches were also present, including the Revs. R. H. Lord, M.A. (Westhoughton) ; Morgan Jones (Egerton) ; E. J. Price, M.A. (Farnworth) ; and also the Rev. D. J. Watham, a former scholar at St. George's Road, now of Reigate.

Mr. William Barlow, President of the Bolton and District Evangelical Free Church Council, welcomed Mr. Mudie on behalf of that body and all affiliated with it. He assured Mr. Mudie that if Bolton people were rough, they were real, perhaps over-candid, but kind, with hearts loyal and spirits brave.

The Rev. A. Le Marchant, B.A., spoke on behalf of Mawdsley Street Church and School, and drew attention to the solidarity of local Congregationalism ; indeed, the character of that meeting indicated the cordiality and affection with which Mawdsley Street greeted Mr. Mudie.

The choir, under Mr. John Thornley as organist and choirmaster, sang an anthem, and the Rev. J. Holden, M.A., of Bowden, read the lessons and preached a sermon from Mark xiv., 9. The meeting was pleased to see on the platform the Rev. James MacDougall, Manchester, the Pastor of Mr. Mudie's youth, and he was entrusted with the special prayer that the new minister of St. George's Road should have a faithful and productive ministry. In his invocation, he expressed a fervent wish that all the generous hopes which had been voiced should have the endorsement of the Great Author.

Mr. Mudie was invited to say a few words, and he said that first they should be words of gratitude for the welcome accorded to him. As to his intentions at St. George's Road, he preferred to outline them parabolically, using as his illustration a holiday experience of seeing the Ramsey lifeboat launched, to go to the lightship some miles out for the purpose of bringing a sick man ashore for medical help. If, said he, he could in Bolton, in his native county, put on the lifebelt and go out to sea with the lifeboat on dark nights and stormy seas, where needs were great, he would assist the men and women in the rescue work of this town.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE CHURCH ORGANS.

First Organ and First Organist—Mr. John Barben's Recollections—Second Organ Bought—Position of First Organ—Second Organ Opened by Dr. Spark—Removal of Organ—Opening by W. T. Best—Water Power for Blowing Introduced—Third and Present Organ—Mr. Milligan's Connection Therewith—Opening by Dr. Bridge—Inscriptions on Organ.

The first Church Organ was a second-hand one, and the particulars relating to this are best given in Mr. Barben's own words. Mr. Barben, however, was not the first organist at St. George's Road Church, this honour being held by Mr. R. G. Rostrom, who removed from Bolton on receiving an appointment in the Inland Revenue Department for the Government, and who died in the early seventies.

On this gentleman resigning, Mr. John Barben became the second organist. He says: "When I was appointed organist in 1864 there was only a very small and poor organ of one manual and six or eight stops, which I think was put in as a temporary affair when the Church was built. I don't remember that there was any builder's name upon it, and if there was it was no credit to him. I think that was made to serve until some time in 1866 or beginning of 1867, when the late Mr. W. H. Davison, who was pastor at the time, on his own initiative, I believe, bought the organ then standing in the Unitarian Church, Cross Street, Manchester, at a cost of £500. It was originally built by Messrs. Gray and Davidson, of Liverpool and London, and had some good qualities as to tone, but the action and mechanical appliances were pretty well worn and obsolete.

"The position of both this and the instrument first mentioned was in the centre of the choir gallery, and this second organ was formally opened by Dr. Spark, the Leeds City Organist in 1868 or 1869. It had two manuals and about 30 stops. The swell manual going to Tenor C only.

The Finance Committee Minute Book records a resolution on June 7th, 1870.

"That the Organ be cleaned and painted, and that it be removed into a chamber formed in the present staircase, which shall be raised to the same height as the main building, and that the wardens with the pastor be a sub-committee to procure estimates and make preliminary arrangements."

The second organ was therefore removed and erected in the chamber prepared for it in the North gallery of the Church, and which still remains the present organ chamber. This work was done by Messrs. Parvin and Son, of Bolton, and no alterations, additions, or improvements were made at this time.

When the work was finished and the organ again ready for use in the service, it was formally opened on Wednesday evening, September 7th, 1870, by a service of praise, and an organ recital by W. T. Best, Esq., of St. George's Hall, Liverpool. There was a large and appreciative audience. The choir, led by Mr. Smethurst, was most efficient, and Mr. John Barben accompanied the choir on the organ in the performance of part second. The Rev. W. H. Davison very appropriately opened the proceedings by reading the 150th Psalm, after which an organ recital was given by Mr. Best, whose skill as an organist is so well known that it would be invidious to comment thereon. The collection at the close realised £26.

On November 19th, 1877, the generous offer of Mr. William Milligan to put in water power to blow the organ was received and handed forward to the Finance Committee. This offer came in the form of a letter to Mr. Webster, Church Secretary, and reads as follows :—

“ Dear Sir,

“ I wish the proposition to blow the organ at the Congregational Church with water power to be settled, and ask you to lay the matter before the Deacons and the Finance Committee as soon as possible, so that the work may be done without further delay.

“ At the present time three pounds is paid to the man for blowing, and I am told he wants more money. In my opinion it is no fit work for any man to go inside the case and work in the dark in a space not more than one yard square.

“ If the Deacons and Committee consent that an Hydraulic Engine be applied for the purpose of blowing the organ, I hereby propose to pay all expenses of the Engine and its connections, and hand over the settled bills in the name of the Trustees of the Congregational Church, on condition that I am paid, if demanded, two pounds a year for the outlay ; or, if it is thought better for the Committee to pay all expenses, I will give ten pounds as a subscription to the expense.

“ If this proposition is carried out the cost of blowing the organ would be, to the

Corporation for water...	..	..	£1	10	0
Interest	..	..	..	2	0
_____					£3 10 0 annually.

“ Yours most respectfully,

“ WILLIAM MILLIGAN.”

This letter was considered on November 28th, 1877, and the proposition accepted with thanks.

A motion of thanks to Mr. Milligan for his kindness in putting to the organ a blowing apparatus was proposed by the Rev. C. A. Berry at the meeting of the Church and Congregation, held on May 16th, 1878, and on this being seconded by Mr. Webster, it was carried unanimously.

This organ, with some minor improvements in the meantime, did duty until 1884, when the present organ was erected in the Church through the instrumentality of Mr. Milligan, the details relating to which are as follows :—

“ At the Annual Meeting of the Church and Congregation held in the Lecture Hall, on May 24th, 1883, a resolution relating to the proposed new organ moved by Mr. Smethurst and seconded by Mr. A. H. Lee, reads as follows :—

“ That this Annual Meeting of Seat-holders and Members having heard Mr. Milligan’s offer to provide a new organ, desires to express to him its grateful appreciation of his generous proposal, and to accept the same on conditions as follows, viz. ;

“ That the sum total to be expended on the new organ shall not exceed the sum promised by Mr. Milligan plus the proceeds of the sale of the present instrument.

“ That the choice of the new organ and all the conditions of its erection shall rest with the Finance Committee. That Mr. Milligan will kindly consent so to word his gift in writing as to quit the Church of all responsibility in regard to the capital or any accumulation of interest which Mr. Milligan may seem fit to allow to grow.”

Mr. Milligan being a consenting party to these terms the motion carried.

Further matters relating to the organ were discussed at the Committee Meeting on December 21st, 1883, and the following entered in the minutes :—“ A report was made to the meeting of the proceedings of the New Organ Sub-Committee, the result of whose proceedings being a tender from Messrs. Brindley and Foster, of Sheffield, to build a new organ according to specification prepared by Mr. Barben, for £775, and to purchase the one in use for £110, which offer was recommended for acceptance. A discussion took place as to finding the balance of the money required, namely £165, when ultimately, taking into account the £31 10s. voted on the 3rd of May previous for the cleaning of the old instrument, Mr. Barben and Mr. Charles Smethurst offered to guarantee

the balance, so that no debt should be created. It was then moved by Mr. Dewsbury and seconded by Mr. Wood :

“ That the report of the sub-committee be adopted and a new organ ordered from Messrs. Brindley and Foster at once, and that the guarantee of Mr. Barben and Mr. Smethurst for the balance required be accepted.”

The Trustees at their meeting on January 7th, 1884, endorsed the proceedings in the following resolution :—

“ That the Document submitted by Mr. Cooper transferring £500 from Mr. Milligan to the Trustees towards a new organ, and securing interest to Mr. Milligan on that amount for his life, be approved.”

Arrangements for the opening of the new organ were stated to be complete on March 30th, 1884. The opening ceremony being fixed for Friday evening, April 4th, 1884, when a crowded congregation assembled for the purpose of listening to a recital by Dr. J. F. Bridge, the eminent organist of Westminster Abbey on the new organ which had been erected in the Church. The recital included some of the choicest gems of organ music by the greatest masters.

The organist gave the various pieces in the programme with masterly ability, succeeding in displaying to the fullest extent the capacities of the new instrument—certainly one of the finest church organs in the town and neighbourhood—and its excellence was on all hands acknowledged, giving the greatest satisfaction to the large congregation present. “ The Dead March ” was introduced in commemoration of the bereavement in the Royal household, the entire audience standing, and the concluding verse of the National Anthem, sung at the close of the recital, was as follows :

“ For her our prayers shall rise,
To God above the skies,
In this sad hour ;
Thou who canst hear each sigh,—
Canst dry each weeping eye,
Be thou for ever nigh
Our Gracious Queen.”

In Mendelssohn’s motett “ Hear my Prayer,” Mrs. Barben sang the solo with touching pathos and sweetness. In connection with the opening services two sermons were preached by the Rev. Professor Scott, Principal of the Lancashire Independent College, Manchester, when collections were made on behalf of the organ fund.

On the organ in the Church the following inscriptions will be found :—

“ In Memoriam, William Milligan. For 50 years member of the Choir and a large benefactor to this Church. Died, 13th November, 1887.”

“ In Memoriam, James Smethurst. For 23 years the esteemed Choirmaster of this Church. Died, 5th May, 1888.”

“ In Memoriam, Charles Smethurst, son of James Smethurst. For 27 years a member of the Choir and afterwards Choirmaster for 9 years. Died, 9th February, 1903. The Choir's token of affection.”

The real cost was about £850 exclusive of engine and feeders, etc., for blowing. Of this sum £500 was generously given by the late Mr. William Milligan and the balance was raised by the Congregation.

When Mr. Barben resigned, the Deacons appointed Mr. William Barlow as organist on May 16th, 1892, and he served the Church in that capacity faithfully and well. It was a great happiness to the Rev. George Barber, and others, to know that Mr. Barlow was able to put so much joy into his work as organist, and to serve in this capacity from disinterested motives.

On July 31st, 1907, the Rev. George Barber read a letter to the Deacons from Mr. William Barlow, in which he resigned the position of organist. This resignation was accepted, and the Church Secretary, Mr. Hutchinson, was instructed to write a letter of appreciation for his many past services. This reads as follows :—

“ Your letter of resignation was discussed by the Deacons, who were greatly disinclined to pass a resolution of acceptance. The tone of your letter, however, was so decided, and the reasons so cogent, that at length your resignation as organist of this Church was reluctantly accepted. In doing so they, with the pastor, desire me to convey to you their great appreciation of your past fifteen years' service, and to do so in the warmest manner. I am sure that during the period named, that you have made many sacrifices of both time and ease. Although your heart has been in the work, there must have been times when you felt the burden. It is therefore due to you for the Deacons to acknowledge your long period of service.”

The question of his successor was many times discussed and on October 25th, 1907, Mr. John Thornley was appointed to the position of organist and choirmaster to this Church, and he is still the organist at present.

A letter was read by the pastor on January 4th, 1912, from Messrs. Cooper and Hamer, intimating that Mrs. James Bromiley had bequeathed to the Trustees of this Church the

sum of £1,000 free from duty, to be applied by them in erecting a new organ in the said Church. On July 17th, 1912, letters were read from Messrs. Cooper and Hamer, re Trustees for Mrs. Bromiley's legacy, and the Secretary was instructed to call a meeting of the old trustees to elect three of their number to receive the legacy.

The first school organ was the gift of Mr. John Manchester in memory of his son, and was played by his daughter, Miss Manchester, as the first organist. She was succeeded by Miss Ramsbottom, and then by Miss Fanny Smethurst. Mr. W. Hope Davison came fourth, and also acted as the deputy church organist from 1869 to 1874. Mr. John Thornley was the next organist, and when he too resigned, his sister, Mrs. T. Picken, officiated in his stead. She still occupies this position of Sunday School organist, and during her thirty years' service has nobly filled this post with satisfaction to all.

A reference to the School organ is found in the proceedings of the Committee Meeting of July 5th, 1883, as follows :—

“ Moved by Mr. Lee and seconded by Mr. Yates, ‘ That in consideration of this organ having been the gift of Mr. Peter Manchester's uncle, we offer the instrument to Mr. Manchester, and if he has no use for it, that we ask his permission to do what we think best with it.’ ”

This was carried unanimously. This instrument is still in existence in St. Matthew's School.

The following is a copy of the plates on the present School organ :—

“ In Memoriam. Adam Ferguson, died 30th of August, 1881. Edward Haddock, died 11th November, 1880. Richard Hamer, died 30th March, 1880. Late Secretaries of the Sunday School.”

“ This tablet is placed here in memory of William Frederick Tillotson, J.P., who rendered especial service as Secretary to the Sunday School. Died February 19th, 1889.”

This organ was erected in memory of the Sunday School Secretaries first named, and was opened by Mr. John Thornley in 1883. Some good work has been put into this organ, and it was really a sample instrument when built.



The late MR. W. MILLIGAN.



The late MR. JAMES SMETHURST, J.P.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE CHURCH CHOIR.

Mr. William Milligan—Mr. James Smethurst, J.P.—Influence of Music—Connection of Mr. Smethurst with Choir—His Death—Mr. John Barben Appointed—Mr. C. E. Smethurst—Resignation—Mr. Harold Barnes—Personal Recollections—Resignation—Organist and Choirmaster Appointed—Dual Office Abolished—Mr. Battle Appointed.

The musical service of the Church has always been noted amongst the other Lancashire Churches in which hearty congregational singing has always been an especial feature. Starting with Duke's Alley, the choir was made up principally of elder scholars from the Sunday School, and in 1827 Mr. Moses Scott was the leading singer.

When the Rev. Samuel Ellis entered on his ministry at Duke's Alley, we find Mr. William Milligan as one of the members of the choir who welcomed him with the hymn :

" We bid thee welcome in the name
 Of Jesus our exalted Head.
Come as a servant, so he came,
 And we receive thee in his stead."

Mr. James Smethurst, J.P., is probably the best remembered gentleman who has conducted the St. George's Road choir, and one who composed many services of song and other musical numbers at various times. In 1882, a service of song entitled "Christ the Light of the World" was rendered by the choir, and again in 1887. This was followed by "The Star of Bethlehem" in 1885, both works being compiled from the sacred narrative by Mr. James Smethurst.

There can be little doubt about the influence of the public service of praise upon the spiritual life of the congregation. There are places where the most refined and cultivated people are stimulated by it, and where the least educated are helped to realise the joy of heaven itself, while they forget their cares and sorrows as the sounds of the organ mingle with those of the choir and the great congregation. The melody of the heart is in all true worship, and gives it whatever of religious efficiency it possesses.

The ideas relating to the musical services of the Church, which are now so freely promulgated on all sides, would, if they had been brought forward fifty years ago, have created quite a consternation in the Nonconformist communities. We have however gone forward since then, not only in music, but in many other respects, where art subserves the purposes of religion. The houses of God are better built, are more suitably decorated ; the organs in our churches, which hardly existed fifty years ago, are now noble instruments, stirring the hearts of the listeners and lifting their conception, through the ear and the soul, to nobler thoughts and imaginations, than they could possibly have had before. Our hymns are also more suitable to the present time. They may possibly lack something of the rugged grandeur of the fine old hymns of the past, but they have, in compensation, a richness of colouring and a delicacy of artistic treatment, in which the older hymns were often comparatively deficient. The aim is to accommodate the music of the church to the requirements of our own times, and the musical knowledge and taste of the people. One great end still remains in view—the devotion of the best to God's glory and the good of His Church.

The bulk of our choir are members of the Church, and those who are not members of the Church are still one with it in heart and feeling, and there is an enormous advantage in this. Music may well be regarded as the handmaid of Christian worship, and an auxiliary to the effort of the worshipper.

Mr. Smethurst was born at Salford, and came to Bolton in 1850 as book-keeper to Messrs. John Musgrave & Sons. About 1860 he obtained a similar position at Messrs T. W. & J. Heaton, staying there till 1870, when he set up in business on his own account as yarn agent. Shortly afterwards he became manager for Messrs. John Thomasson & Sons, and continued in that position until his death on May 5th, 1888. For several years he conducted the choral services at the Moor Lane Baptist Chapel, and was the choirmaster at St. George's Road Congregational Church from 1864 till his death.

On Friday evening, January 22nd, 1870, a meeting of a very pleasant character was held for the purpose of recognising the valuable and eminent services of the choirmaster, Mr. James Smethurst, whose earnest and unremitting labours in that

capacity for the previous six years had given great satisfaction. The Rev. W. H. Davison presided, and during the evening the choir gave very creditably a somewhat lengthy programme of genuine music, accompanied on the pianoforte by Mr. John Barben, organist. During the evening Mr. Smethurst was presented with a gold watch, chain, and appendages, a silver tea and coffee service, and a silver salver, this latter bearing the following inscription : "Presented, together with a tea and coffee service, gold watch, etc., to Mr. James Smethurst, by the members of the St. George's Road Congregational Church, Bolton, in grateful acknowledgment of his services as choirmaster, from 1864 to 1870." On the shield of the watch were engraved the initials " J.S. "

The Rev. W. H. Davison made the presentation and said he had been deputed by the Members and Congregation generally to express to Mr. Smethurst the grateful appreciation which they all felt for his services as choirmaster. It was not always that the sons of harmony were very harmonious ; but he could express, as all could who had anything to do with the choir, that there had been, since Mr. Smethurst came amongst them and took his position as master, the most perfect harmony—not only between him and the choir who had assisted him in the service of song, but also between him and the congregation generally. They had all felt the importance of a glad service of praise in their worship ; and, as the years had passed, they had felt more and more how much was due to the manner in which they were able, as the result of his services, to celebrate the high praise of God. They felt that in the application of those services, extending as they did over the best days of his life, he must have sacrificed his time to serve them in the way he had done, and they asked him to accept the offering as an expression of their gratitude, and as a small memorial of their appreciation of the past and their happy association together in the worship of God, assuring him that it would be a joy to them to know that the articles they had presented to him would be of service to him and to his family.

Mr. Smethurst, on rising to acknowledge the gifts, was warmly received, and expressed his sincere and heartfelt gratitude to one and all for the present they had bestowed upon

him. Whatever slight services he had rendered, he had done so cheerfully and without hope of reward ; but that day would be a red-letter day in his life, and one the recollection of which he should long cherish.

One of our severest losses was caused by the death of Mr. James Smethurst, J.P., who had been our choirmaster for twenty-three years, and in other capacities had rendered good service to the varied institutions connected with the Church. Our service of praise on the Lord's Day owed its efficiency to the musical knowledge and culture, the wisdom and tact, the energy and devotion, and the personal influence and control of our late friend. He suffered severely in his last illness, which was protracted for six weeks, but he was very patient in it all. He died on May 5th, 1888, and was interred at Heaton Cemetery on the 7th. A funeral service was held in the Church where he had for so long directed its praise, which was attended by a large number of the congregation, and by representatives of the various organizations of the town of which he was a member. The service was conducted by the Rev. J. R. Wolstenholme, M.A., and was a very impressive one. This was preceded by a special Committee Meeting—on May 7th, 1888, for the purpose of placing on record the following resolution which was moved by Mr. Ottewill, seconded by Mr. Robinson, supported by several gentlemen, and carried unanimously.

“That the members of the Finance Committee of St. George's Road Congregational Church in special meeting assembled, desire to express the sorrow with which they have heard of the severe and protracted sufferings of one of their number—Mr. James Smethurst—now terminated by death. They would place on record their grateful sense of the many services which he has rendered in various capacities to promote the welfare and prosperity of this Church. As a member of the Finance Committee, as Vice-President of the Mutual Improvement Society, but above all as Choirmaster for twenty-three years, during which he gave most valuable help which now will be sorely missed. Especially would they recognise with admiration and gratitude the intelligent and untiring devotion which he manifested, up to his last illness, in the conduct of sacred song in the worship of the Church. To his industry, musical knowledge and culture, his genial courtesy and personal presence and control, it is owing that the service of Praise on the Lord's Day has been so efficient and helpful, and that the history of the Choir for so many years has been so pleasant and harmonious. They feel that the varied help rendered by their late friend and the choir over which he presided, cannot adequately be described within the dimensions of a resolution like this, but they sadly

express the sense of loss which his death has brought upon them, and of the extreme difficulty of finding anyone with the like endowments and spirit to take his place. To the bereaved widow and family they wish to convey most respectfully the expression of their sincere sympathy in the trouble they have been called upon to pass through, and in the bereavement which they must feel for a long time to come, and would commend them most affectionately to the goodness and grace of the Heavenly Father."

A copy of this resolution was forwarded by the Secretary to Mrs. Smethurst, and a deputation appointed to attend the funeral together with the members of the choir.

At the Deacons' Meeting held on October 1st, 1888, it was agreed that in accordance with the request of the choir as expressed in the letter from their secretary of the 8th of June, that Mr. John Barben be the choirmaster for this Church, he having been appointed as such during the absence of the late choirmaster since 1886.

Mr. Barben resigned his position as organist on June 30th, 1892. Having served in this position for 28 years and choirmaster 6 years, this resignation was accepted with great regret.

On May 5th, 1892, Mr. William Barlow was appointed as organist in his place, and Mr. Charles Smethurst asked to become choirmaster.

During the year 1890, the service of song entitled "The Nativity," which was compiled by Mr. C. E. Smethurst, was rendered by the choir at the School Sermons. He also composed many musical numbers. Born at Bolton, and a life-long resident, Mr. Smethurst was a yarn agent and merchant by profession, and for 27 years was a member of the choir and for nine years choirmaster at this Church. On March 17th, 1901, Mr. C. E. Smethurst resigned the position of choirmaster, which was accepted. He died on February 9th, 1903.

On May 13th Mr. Harold Barnes was asked to take charge of the choir practices for the time being, and a deputation appointed to wait upon him. On May 29th the pastor reported the deputation's visit to Mr. Barnes, when a promise was made by that gentleman to do all he could for the choir, commencing on June 7th, 1901.

Mr. Barnes has very kindly favoured me with some personal recollections of his connection with our choir, and as these are interesting I produce them in full.

"The St. George's Road choir had been under Mr. James and Mr. C. E. Smethurst for about 35 years, and when Mr. Charles Smethurst resigned, the choir did not quite know where to look for a successor. After being some months without a choirmaster I was approached, possibly because my father and myself had had control of the Farnworth choir for about the same period. For the sake of its traditions, I was willing to help it so far as I could, and for 6 or 7 years carried on both choirs. I believe I am correct when I say I didn't lose a single member of the choir I found at St. George's Road, except by removals from the neighbourhood. This speaks for the relations between choir and choirmaster. The spirit in which the choir received a perfect stranger was admirable, but we shall none of us forget the first few rehearsals. School Sermons in three weeks and a Cantata and two awkward anthems to prepare ; rehearsals from 8 to 11 ; the choirmaster apologising for the late hour and the choir fully alive to the necessity ; we pulled through somehow.

"None could wish to meet a happier, pleasanter band of individuals from 1901-1907.

"Mr. William Barlow, organist throughout my time at St. George's Road, wishing to have more leisure to devote to some other work, sent in his resignation on July 31st, 1907. I sent in mine about the same time because the Deacons wanted to have an organist who could also take charge of the choir. The whole arrangement was perfectly good tempered on all sides. The choir and myself were excellent friends, and we parted with regret towards the end of the year."

An advertisement for an organist and choirmaster was issued in the local papers in October, and on October 27th, 1907, Mr. John Thornley was appointed, on the resolution moved by the Rev. George Barber and seconded by Mr. D. Ottewill.

After a time it was felt that the dual office was somewhat unsatisfactory and accordingly a desire was expressed that a return to the old conditions should be made. Accordingly at the Deacons' Meeting held on July 17th, 1912, the resignation of Mr. John Thornley as choirmaster was accepted with the proviso that he be asked to continue to act in the dual capacity until a suitable choirmaster should be appointed.

A sub-committee was appointed to consider the question of choirmaster, and they submitted a report on September 19th, 1912, when it was resolved: "That a professional choirmaster be appointed, and that in making the new appointment the choir be consulted." Mr. C. E. Garn officiated as chairman of the sub-committee and all members thereof were present at each meeting.

The above resolutions were approved with a recommendation to the sub-committee to meet the choir, and ask them to appoint four representatives to act jointly with them in order to recommend a suitable gentleman for the position of choirmaster.

As the result of their deliberations, they reported on October 25th, 1912, that they had selected Mr. Fred Battle as the most suitable gentleman to fill the office, and the choir also approved of his appointment. The report was received and a resolution adopted "That Mr. Battle be appointed as choirmaster." Mr. John Thornley had previously agreed to continue as organist, his resignation of the office of choirmaster having been accepted on July 17th, 1912.

A cultured choir, where good singers can consecrate their gifts to swell the volume of praise in the Church, under the leadership of Mr. Frederick Battle, A.M.U.S., T.C.L., now leads the musical portion of the worship, and Mr. John Thornley ably presides at the organ. Mr. Battle entered on his duties as choirmaster on November 8th, 1912.

CHAPTER XXVII.

INFLUENCES FOR GOOD.

Christian Effort Society—Christian Endeavour Society—Girls' Guild—Band of Hope—Sunday School Report for 1912—Young Men's Institute—Sick Society—Its Winding Up—Officers of Church—Women's Guild—Watcher's Band—Old Folks' Party.

The first session of the Christian Effort Society ran during the winter of 1893-4, under the presidency of Mr. Fred Cooper, with Messrs. James Atherton, B. Cole, J. B. Parkinson, H. S. Sturges, J. Taylor and J. F. Warbrick as vice-presidents, and met on Wednesday evenings from eight to nine o'clock.

This was the latest fruit of our Church and School organization at this time, and was born out of the needs of both. It was one of the outcomes of a very earnest endeavour to awaken a more devoted and intelligent spirit of consecration to the work of our Lord Jesus Christ. Coming after the attempts made in the early part of 1893 to arouse both Church and Congregation to a closer realization of their responsibilities—attempts so signally blessed of God—it sought to fix an enduring impress on the methods and spirit of the active work of both Church and School.

Its objects were “to unite in one common aim and purpose all who are willing to engage in Christian service of any kind. To bring about a truer realization of what is meant by Christian service. To implant purer and better motives for Christian work, and to win those whose hands and hearts are now idle, so that they may share the glory and blessedness of Christian activity.”

The organizations affiliated thereto were the Band of Hope, the Mutual Improvement Society, the Cottage Meetings, the Girls' Guild, the School Gymnasium, and Mr. Smethurst's Singing Class.

Some of these are not now in active operation, being merged into other efforts which are working along good and successful lines.

A Christian Endeavour Society was eventually formed in April, 1894, to promote an earnest Christian life among its members, and was productive of much good.

The second season of the Girls' Guild was concluded at the end of 1894, under the superintendence of Miss E. Mason and Mrs. T. Picken, and they had every reason to be proud of the good work accomplished. These meetings are to help to bring the girls into closer relationship with each other, and everything is done to make the evening both pleasant and profitable.

The Girls' Guild continues its good work among the girls, who meet for sewing, readings, debates, etc., on Monday evenings, Thursdays for the gymnasium, and Saturdays for games and music. The president is Mrs. Mudie, and the honorary secretary and treasurer is Miss A. F. Holt. Flowers are sent out weekly, with messages of comfort and love to the



Miss E. MASON.



Miss A. J. ATHERTON.



Miss ALICE ATHERTON.



Mrs. T. PICKEN.

sick members of our Church and School, by Miss Polly Banks, who has so faithfully carried out this duty for so many years. It is quite a treat to see the girls teaching one another different kinds of work, and those who take sufficient interest to come and give instruction in this way to the members, cannot help but feel satisfied with the results of their efforts.

There is always room for workers in the Band of Hope, where we contend against the evils and perils of drunkenness by that method of trying to promulgate principles of prevention which is better than cure. Interesting programmes are given each month from October to March, and the attendance at these meetings is usually very good. Mr. Fred W. Leach, and Mr. W. Orrell, are the secretaries, and they are always glad of helpers to make the meetings successful, either of a financial character, or as entertainers in any way. Total abstinence pledge cards are issued to all willing to sign same.

From the report of the Sunday School for 1912, we note that satisfactory progress has been made during the year and an increase in the number of scholars recorded. Five new classes were formed in the Junior Section. Miss A. J. Atherton resigned her position as teacher of the women's class after a connection with the School ranging over 44 years. Her sister, Miss Alice Atherton, is still teaching the class in conjunction with Miss Mason, who has seen very considerable service in connection with both School and Church.

Mrs. Picken is the School organist, and has played for us for thirty-two years, endearing herself to all in that connection. She is also a member of the choir, and in training children for the various concerts and other entertainments has done great good.

The St. George's Road Young Men's Institute is doing good work in more ways than one, and is in a flourishing condition. Activity creates prosperity even more than prosperity creates activity. At its annual meeting it reported that it had over 80 members; that it had contributed £9 in the course of the year to other objects; and that it had £7 in hand. "There is he that scattereth, and yet increaseth." Some of our subsidiary societies act at times as though their sole function was to be helped; consequently their energies wane, and they wonder why.

The Institute was opened by the Rev. George Barber, in October, 1903, and we can look back with pride upon the results of this effort, and sincerely hope that it may continue its useful work for many years to come. The success of the Institute does not rest solely with the members, but with the teachers of the School as well. The assembling of the young men in the rooms gives the teachers an opportunity of associating with them and showing their sympathy in the work ; and if more of the teachers would visit the Institute—if only once a week—they would render a great service, and would, we feel sure, derive a benefit as well as their scholars.

The President of the Young Men's Institute is the Rev. Howard Mudie, B.D. The chairman is Mr. Reginald Kirk, and the treasurer, Mr. Arthur Fielden, and the secretary is Mr. F. Rothwell.

A good feature of the Institute is its Code of Honour :—“ I promise not to gamble, and to do all in my power to prevent the gambling spirit from entering into the Institute,” and this we feel sure has been strictly observed.

The Institute and its various organizations have been the means of creating a good spirit of comradeship among the young men, the results of which are felt both in Church and School.

The St. George's Road Congregational Sunday School Sick and Funeral Society has been in existence something like 100 years all told. It is therefore a matter of regret that it is now disbanded. On going over the history I find that a sick club has been formed in every case where a new interest has been started. The past year, however, has been a decisive one in its history. The members had to consider the future owing to the operations of the Insurance Act, and therefore they were asked to vote by ballot whether the Society was to be formed into, or join some other Society approved under the Act or be dissolved. A Special General Meeting was held on April 15th, 1912, and as most of the members had joined some other approved society, they could not afford to pay into two societies, and, as our own Society would in the future make very few new members, and the funds would therefore gradually decrease, they decided that the Society should be wound up immediately after the Insurance Act



MINISTER AND DEACONS, ST. GEORGE'S ROAD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, 1913.

benefits came into operation. The last day for paying contributions was January 12th, 1913, and for receiving benefits, January 14th, 1913. Accordingly on March 3rd, 1913, the Society was disbanded and the money paid to the members as per scale agreed upon.

It was felt that the services of the Treasurer and Secretary should be recognised in some way and a subscription was made for that purpose.

On March 16th, 1913, a very pleasant little gathering took place in the Institute, to present to Mr. F. E. Thomasson a travelling bag in recognition of his services. Mr. F. W. Peaples acted as chairman, and Mr. James Thornley, in a few well chosen words, made the presentation, which Mr. Thomasson suitably acknowledged.

Mr. Thornley then presented Mr. Albert Haslam, the secretary, with a gentleman's dressing outfit and wallet, which was acknowledged.

A pleasing feature was the unexpected presentation by Mr. Albert Haslam, of purses to Miss Hardman and Miss Gee, as a recognition of their long services as sick visitors. Votes of thanks to the committee were given, and the meeting closed.

The following is the list of Officers of the Church and Congregation :—Deacons : Messrs. C. E. Garn, J. W. Sefton, T. Picken, C. H. Beswick, W. I. Bromiley, W. Barlow, R. Cunliffe, R. Hargreaves, A. E. Holt, R. Warburton, J. Nicholson, junr., R. Kirk. Secretary to Church and Deacons, Mr. R. Kirk.

The Finance Committee consists of the Minister and Deacons named above, with Mr. A. E. Holt as Chairman, Mr. W. N. Birchby, Vice-chairman ; Mr. Arthur Tyas Cooper, Secretary ; Messrs. F. Allcott, W. Barton, J. Bury, G. Clarkson, T. Demain, A. Fielden, G. B. Hamer, L. Haslam, H. Haywood, J. Hetherington, J. B. Holden, T. Lee, J. Nicholson, F. E. Thomasson, J. Thornley, W. Hanscomb, R. Woods. Churchwardens : Messrs. W. Barton, G. Clarkson, G. B. Hamer and L. Haslam.

A Women's Guild of Christian Service was established on November 1st, 1904, and before many weeks were over it was realised what a great work it could do. During the Christmas time and also at New Year more than a hundred garments,

which the members of the Guild had made, were given to the poor children, not only of our own School and Mission, but to many others who became known to the members only through their poverty. This is the sort of practical Christianity that Christ loves. Associated with this Guild are Prayer Meetings, Bible Lessons, and Mothers' Meetings, and also a large visiting committee of ladies. It is quite safe to say that this Guild of Service is an inestimable blessing to the Church.

It is in the Sewing Meeting, where the skilled industry of the ladies is consecrated to the service of the poor and missionary objects, that great helpfulness is exerted.

In the spring of 1911 the Guild held a small Sale of Work which realised £40, half of which was given to the New School Fund, and the remainder to various outside objects. Not only does the School benefit therefore from this Guild, but local and other desirable objects also.

For the first time two lady representatives have been sent from our Guild to the Bolton Congregational Council—Mrs. Mudie and Mrs. Thompson. As delegates to the District Council they are now eligible for election to the Lancashire Congregational Union Council, which would bring the Guild into official connection with the Union—a consummation to be much desired, as we think it would give added power and interest to our work.

The President of the Guild is Mrs. C. V. Thompson, and Mrs. Mudie is Vice-president. The Treasurers are Miss E. Taylor, and Miss E. Shepherd. The Secretary is Mrs. C. H. Beswick.

A "Watchers' Band" is in operation in connection with the Church, and Miss Annie Holt is the Secretary. Members to this are very welcome.

The thirty-first Old Folks' Re-union was held on Wednesday, December 25th, 1912, and was a great success. This re-union is worked by the Men's Class and its purpose is to bring together the old people who are in any way connected with the Church and School, for a tea and pleasant intercourse together at Christmas time. Anyone, therefore, who has parents or grandparents of 60 years old and upwards, can get a ticket through any of the members of the Men's Class, which will enable the old people to have a free Christmas tea and re-union.

The Church Choir has always provided the entertainment with the assistance of Teddy Whittle as humorist, who is also a member of the Men's Class. He keeps himself free from engagements at Christmas in order to do this, and has become a standing institution at these parties. A legacy has been left to the Church by the late Mr. James Bromiley, in order to meet the expenses of this old folks' party. The re-union was really started by the Men's Class in 1881, at the wish of Mr. John Davenport, who was then its teacher.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

EARLY SUNDAY SCHOOL WORK IN BOLTON.

James Hey—Financial Assistance—Branches Formed—Robert Raike's National Schools—Walkden School—Ridgway Gates Wesleyan—Horwich Congregational—Sermon at Westhoughton—Teaching Services Free at Bolton—First Independent School.

Congregationalists have always been recognised as eminent teachers, and in the early days of their existence they were said to be better teachers than preachers. This fact, perhaps, explains the great success that has resulted from their Sunday School efforts at all times, for, with considerable foresight, the ablest men have generally given themselves to it. There is always excellent work to be done in the Sunday School, where sympathy and help are so much prized, and always welcome. The opportunities of service are as various as they are abundant, and willing workers are always needed. It is not consistent with the spirit of our religion that any of us should be hearers of the Word and not doers also.

Curiously enough, no reliable records relating to Sunday School work in connection with Duke's Alley are in existence, beyond the fact that the Rev. William Maurice established the first Sunday School in connection therewith. Somewhere in 1796 is as near the date of its establishment as I can find. In 1856 a Day School was opened in Duke's Alley Schoolroom, and this was a fitting climax to Sunday School work, when reading and writing had to be taught as well as the Scriptures.

To trace out the growth of Sunday School work in Bolton is a task, though an interesting one. Before the time of Robert Raikes, a zealous man at Little Lever, James Hey, better known as "Jemmy-o'th'-Hey," carried on a Sunday School, and has a clear title to be considered as an organiser of such work, prior to Raikes, of Gloucester. Even the Little Leverite was not the first person to hold Sunday Classes, but he is the only one of whom we have thoroughly reliable records.

"Old Jemmy" during the week used to wind bobbins for weavers, and on Sundays taught the boys and girls of the neighbourhood to read. The scholars assembled twice each Sunday in the cottage of a neighbour, and were called together by the rattling of an old brass pestle and mortar. An employer of labour, Adam Crompton, a paper manufacturer, began to supply the schoolmaster with books, and subscriptions in money were also given to him. He taught the young people to read and spell with such success that older pupils of both sexes were added to the school. No place of worship existed in the district, and his scholars so rapidly increased, that three healthy branch establishments were formed, and through the help of Mr. Crompton, "Old Jemmy" was able to pay his assistant teachers one shilling a Sunday for their services, a custom that was followed later by Robert Raikes.

Mr. Crompton waited upon other gentlemen, and these seeing that the School deserved encouragement, gave their patronage in the shape of subscriptions ; and so the branches were kept going, and from these branches sprang others equally healthy, and thus the system spread locally.

Long before Sunday Schools were established as an Institution, they existed, here and there, undetected, undeveloped seeds, in the hands of humble and obscure workers. These were the pioneers of the great institution, preparing the way of those to come.

It is not easy to say whether Hey's or Raikes' influence affected the Bolton district the most, but to Robert Raikes must be accorded the palm for giving Sunday School work its national importance. While we do well to honour Raikes as the founder and organiser of Sunday Schools, we ought not to forget "Old Jemmy." His name is scarcely known, and although he too was a pioneer in this great work, no monument

or recognition of his work of any kind has been erected to him in his native place of Little Lever. Many small schools were in existence locally before 1780, and within a few years of that time many others sprang into being. James Hey started his work in 1775, and eventually a Sunday School was opened on the 22nd of August, 1784, at Walkden Moor, in the higher division of Worsley, which met with general approbation and encouragement from the inhabitants. Upwards of 100 joined the first Sunday, on the 2nd, 120, and on the 3rd upwards of 140, thus enrolling 360 scholars in three weeks.

To the Wesleyans at Ridgway Gates Chapel must be accorded the honour of leading the way in Sunday School teaching in Bolton, their School being opened in June, 1785. A sermon was preached at this Chapel on Sunday, the 3rd of July, 1787, at half-past five o'clock in the evening, by Mr. Rhodes, for the benefit of the Sunday School. Hymns suitable to the occasion were sung by the children. The School was in a flourishing state, 800 children being taught in it, many of whom had made proficiency in reading and writing. About a hundred of them were taught to sing, and these teachings created a very great reformation among the children in general. Mr. Wesley records the excellence of the singing of the children in Bolton, and said, "nothing could excel it, except the singing of the angels in our Father's House." In April, 1788, Mr. Wesley refers to the fact of his addressing between 900 and 1,000 children, and says: "I never saw such a sight before. They were all exactly clean, as well as plain, in their apparel; all very serious and well behaved. Many, both boys and girls, had as beautiful faces as I believe England or Europe can afford. When they all sang together, and none of them out of tune, the melody was beyond that of any theatre, and what is best of all, many of them truly fear God, and some of them rejoice in His salvation."

A Sunday School was opened in June, 1787, in the Congregational Chapel, at Horwich, under the inspection of the Rev. Leonard Redmayn, where upwards of one hundred poor children were instructed, by five masters, in the branches of learning peculiar to such institutions. The people at Horwich were happy to hear that the neighbouring congregations were adopting the same plan.

A few months later, a Charity Sermon for the benefit of Sunday Schools was preached at Westhoughton Chapel, by the Rev. Mr. Baldwin, from the text of "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not!" The notice relating to this quaintly adds, "The excellence of this sermon will be best proved to our readers by its effects, which was a collection of upwards of twenty pounds," a really good collection for those days, considering the circumstances of the people.

Wesley records that the masters in the Bolton Sunday Schools gave their services gratuitously as early as 1785.

After the Rev. John Holland settled at Bank Street Chapel in 1789, he at once set to work to establish a Sunday School; and in the very year of his appointment, succeeded in doing this. A room was taken by Mr. Holland at the bottom of Acres Field, and there a little Sunday School was conducted until 1796, when a building to replace this was erected on the south side of the Chapel in Bank Street, and to this the scholars were transferred.

Curiously enough, the first Sunday School that was recognised as being worked as an Independent or Congregational Sunday School, was also commenced in 1796, in a room in Moor Lane, and was productive of great benefit.

This was established under the oversight of the Rev. William Maurice, and in 1811 was removed to the premises adjoining the Duke's Alley Chapel. These were enlarged in 1818, and were eventually used as vestry, library, and class rooms. The number of scholars gradually increased, and the present school premises were erected in 1840, and used for Sunday School purposes with additions thereto until closed in 1902.

CHAPTER XXIX.

ESTABLISHMENT OF ST. GEORGE'S ROAD SUNDAY SCHOOL.

Opening Services of School and Church—Lark Street School—Resolution for Removal of School—Influence of Sunday School Work—Preparatory for Church—Day School—Infant School and Lecture Hall Built—Day School Resolution—25th Anniversary of School.

The Church and Congregation at Duke's Alley having decided to remove to their new building, opened on March 29th, 1863, the first services were carried on in the Schoolroom, whose Jubilee we are celebrating this year.

The School is in a prosperous condition, and much good and solid work has been done in it. What its influence has really been on the religious life of the town and in other lands, no one can exactly measure, but it has been truly great.

Prior to this time, however, a Sunday School had been started in the Lark Street Temperance Hall (now used as stables), about two years previously (May, 1861), so as to gather a number of other scholars together in readiness for the opening of the new School under the Church.

Mr. James Lever was the first superintendent of Lark Street School, and Mr. Joseph Bradshaw the second. Messrs. James Atherton, James Scrimgeour, and a goodly company of others from Duke's Alley were teachers there. Several of the older scholars in the School attended also. They gathered together a good School in these premises, and when the new Church was opened, the teachers and scholars, numbering from 100 to 150, joined those from Duke's Alley and formed the new Sunday School opened at St. George's Road. Lark Street School was then given up.

The resolution for the removal of the School was adopted at a Church Meeting on April 2nd, 1861, and reads as follows :—

“ Resolved that a New School in connection with this Church be established as soon as a suitable building can be obtained, and that the Pastor and his council, together with the officers and male teachers of the School be a sub-committee to form the new school; and that the above, together with the teachers of the new school, be a committee to manage both schools under the direct influence of the Church, and reporting to it time after time.”

This matter was further discussed at the Church Meeting in June, 1861, when it was resolved that all existing rules having reference to the working of the Sunday School connected with this Church should be rescinded, and the following regulations were then adopted after the same had been discussed :—

“ That all institutions or operations intended for the religious training and education of the young—the preaching of the gospel and the extension of the Redeemer’s Kingdom, should emanate from, be supported by, and carried on under the superintendence of the Church. And that for the carrying out of this fundamental principle the Church should appoint or sanction the formation of such committees or organizations as shall appear to it to be expedient or necessary for the efficient carrying out of any special object contemplated.

“ That as it is in contemplation to establish another Sunday School in Little Bolton, it is expedient and necessary that the Church should place on record this declaration of its relation to the School already in existence and operation and also to any other school or schools which may hereafter be established under its auspices.

“ Resolved : That any school or schools connected with this Church, whether Day or Sunday Schools, shall be under the management and direction of a Committee consisting of the Pastor, Deacons of the Church, the Officers of the Schools for the time being, together with five members of the Church and five teachers from each Sunday School, chosen annually by the Church and the teachers respectively. Five members present at any meeting—duly called—shall form a quorum.

“ That the teachers of each Sunday School shall make rules for the internal management and regulation of the details of their respective schools. They shall annually elect their own superintendents, secretaries, and members of committees, either by ballot or otherwise as they may decide to be most expedient.”

Sunday Schools have now become one of the recognised institutions in connection with Christian Churches throughout the world, and no church is now considered complete without its Sunday School. This unites the different classes of the community together, for there the rich and the poor, the master and servant, the manufacturer and operative, meet together and learn that God is the maker of them all. The mightiest power of the Sunday School teacher is his own character, and the influence that character exercises upon his scholars. It is the Church’s mission to the young, and to the young of all classes, one of its first aims being to inculcate due reverence for the Sabbath day. It places the Bible in the hands of its teachers; the teachers expound it to their scholars in order to make them “ wise unto salvation.”

The Sunday School is still the most potent factor in the



The late MR. W. F. TILLOTSON, J.P.

work of social reform, and is on every hand diminishing social evil, and promoting social good. The institution trains thoughtful, sober, and industrious citizens.

In the minds of many scholars the School is everything, the Church nothing. When School is over they go home, or for a walk, and never think of appearing in the house of God, or give any recognition to the claims of the Church. The School is the nursery of the Church, but some Churches are not supreme in their own nursery, the lines of their activities being parallel instead of converging, resulting in the life of the School being too much detached from the life of the Church. Fortunately, here there has always been a mutual interdependence which has tended towards the mutual benefit of each. When the members of a Church are most alive to their duties as members, and take a practical interest in its life and growth, then the School and Church are not two but one. The great bulk of our teachers are church members, and a teacher who is a loyal church member always does a great deal towards establishing a bond between Church and School. This fact was very early recognised in our Church, and in going through its early history, we find that nearly all the most prominent workers in the Church were workers in or connected in some way with the School. Names stand out prominently in the pages of this history as an example of this fact, and the grand old men of the Church were the grand old men of the School. Let us hope it will always remain so, for where the church life is most vigorous, there it will be found that the tie is strongest between Church and School. There should be no estrangement between the life of the Church and the hearts of the young ; we must ever strive to make our Churches such centres of power and joy, and gladness, that the young people shall say to us : " We will go with you, for we perceive that the Lord is with you."

Many honoured names stand out in connection with our Sunday School at its inception, Mr. James Lever and Mr. J. Bradshaw being its first superintendents ; Mr. W. F. Tillotson and Mr. H. S. Sturges, the first school Secretaries.

Since that time the record of service is an honourable one, many names standing out prominently in the Christian records of the town and neighbourhood.

The following is a complete list of the Superintendents and Secretaries of the Sunday School, together with their periods of service:—

SUPERINTENDENTS.	SECRETARIES.	YEAR.
Mr. J. Lever and Mr. J. Bradshaw ..	Mr. W. F. Tillotson and H. S. Sturges ..	1862
Mr. Lever and Mr. J. Bradshaw ..	Mr. W. F. Tillotson and H. S. Sturges ..	1863
Mr. Bradshaw and Mr. J. Taylor ..	Mr. W. F. Tillotson ..	1864
Mr. Lever and Mr. Taylor ..	Mr. W. F. Tillotson and W. Gregory ..	1865
Mr. Lever and Mr. Taylor ..	Mr. W. F. Tillotson ..	1866
Mr. H. Webster ..	Mr. W. F. Tillotson and A. Ferguson, jr.	1867
Mr. Webster and Mr. Taylor ..	Mr. W. F. Tillotson and A. and H. Ferguson ..	1868
Mr. Webster and Mr. Taylor ..	Mr. W. F. Tillotson and Rd. Hamer ..	1869
Mr. J. B. Parkinson ..	Mr. W. F. Tillotson and Rd. Hamer ..	1870
Mr. Parkinson ..	Mr. W. F. Tillotson and Hamer and Thomas Baines ..	1871
Mr. Parkinson ..	Geo. Taylor and Ed. Haddock ..	1872
Mr. Parkinson and Mr. Cole ..	Geo. Taylor and Ed Haddock ..	1873
Mr. B. Cole and Mr. J. Holt ..	Geo. Taylor and Ed. Haddock ..	1874
Mr. Cole and Mr. Holt ..	Geo Taylor and Ed. Haddock ..	1875
Mr. Cole and Mr. Holt ..	Geo. Taylor and Ed. Haddock ..	1876
Mr. Cole and Mr. Holt ..	E. Haddock and F. Cooper ..	1877
Mr. Cole and Mr. Holt ..	E. Haddock and F. Cooper ..	1878
Mr. Cole and Mr. Holt ..	E. Haddock and F. Cooper ..	1879
Mr. Cole and Mr. Holt ..	E. Haddock and F. Cooper ..	1880
Mr. Cole and Mr. Ottewill ..	F. Cooper and S. C. Horrocks ..	1881
Mr. Cole and Mr. Ottewill ..	S. C. Horrocks and H. Swift ..	1882
Mr. Cole and Mr. Ottewill ..	S. C. Horrocks and H. Swift ..	1883
Mr. Cole and Mr. Ottewill ..	S. C. Horrocks and H. Swift ..	1884
Mr. Cole and Mr. A. H. Lee ..	H. Swift and C. Brierley ..	1885
Mr. Cole and Mr. Lee ..	H. Swift and C. Brierley ..	1886
Mr. Cole ..	H. Swift and Jos. Thornley ..	1887
Mr. Cole ..	H. Swift and Jos. Thornley ..	1888
Mr. Cole ..	J. Thornley and W. M. Horrocks ..	1889
Mr. Cole ..	J. Thornley and W. M. Horrocks ..	1890
Mr. Cole ..	J. Thornley and W. M. Horrocks ..	1891
Mr. Cole ..	J. Thornley and Reg. Kirk ..	1892
Mr. Cole ..	J. Thornley and Reg. Kirk ..	1893
Mr. Cole and Mr. F. Cooper ..	J. Thornley and Reg. Kirk ..	1894
Mr. Cole and Mr. F. Cooper ..	J. Thornley and Reg. Kirk ..	1895
Mr. Cole and Mr. F. Cooper ..	J. Thornley and Reg. Kirk ..	1896
Mr. Cole and Mr. F. Cooper ..	J. Thornley and Geo. Edge ..	1897
Mr. Cole and Mr. F. Cooper ..	J. Thornley and Geo. Edge ..	1898
Mr. Cole and Mr. F. Cooper ..	J. Thornley and Geo. Edge ..	1899
Mr. Cole and Mr. T. Picken ..	J. Thornley and Geo. Edge ..	1900
Mr. Cole and Mr. T. Picken ..	J. Thornley and Geo. Edge ..	1901
Mr. T. Picken ..	J. Thornley and Geo. Edge ..	1902
Mr. T. Picken ..	J. Thornley ..	1903
Mr. T. Picken ..	A. Fielden and J. Henderson ..	1904
Mr. T. Picken ..	A. Fielden and J. Henderson ..	1905
Mr. T. Picken and Mr. R. Kirk ..	A. Fielden and J. Henderson ..	1906
Mr. T. Picken and Mr. R. Kirk ..	A. Fielden and J. Henderson ..	1907
Mr. Picken ..	A. Fielden and J. Henderson ..	1908
Mr. Picken and Mr. C. H. Beswick ..	A. Fielden and J. Henderson ..	1909
Mr. Picken and Mr. C. H. Beswick ..	A. Fielden and F. Fyles ..	1910
Mr. Picken and Mr. C. H. Beswick ..	A. Fielden and F. Fyles ..	1911
Mr. Picken and Mr. C. H. Beswick ..	F. Fyles and J. S. Banks ..	1912

The Day School which was worked so successfully at St. George's Road under Mr. Hetherington as the Headmaster, was arranged for at a special Church Meeting held early in 1868, when the following resolution was unanimously passed:—

“That a Day School under Government inspection be established as soon as the requisite arrangements can be made.”

The School started at the beginning of 1869. It was conducted by the Committee appointed as an undenominational School, their aim being to give the pupils the best education

possible to fit them for their work in life. The first master was Mr. W. H. Miles.

In January, 1873, Mr. J. Hetherington, of Homerton College, London, commenced duties as Headmaster, and for a period of 25 years he conducted the School with remarkable success. This is shown by the influential positions that many of the old pupils have attained both in the town and elsewhere.

The success of this School soon rendered a new Infant School necessary, and early in 1875, efforts were made to accomplish this object and at the same time a new Lecture Hall. The following circular was therefore issued :—

" The Pastor and Building Committee desire to bring before your notice the question of raising the necessary funds for the above erection, and to ask your earnest assistance. Many of the Members of the Congregation will no doubt be fully aware of the circumstances which have compelled us to the erection of a new Infant School; but for others who may not know the facts of the case a few words of explanation may be desirable.

" The Day School has hitherto been very successful, especially in the Infant department. The large numbers of Infants in attendance, and the exceedingly poor accommodation for them, have not only caused great inconvenience to the teachers, but have also tended to produce sickness amongst the children. Frequently this question of health has been made a matter of complaint on the part of the parents; the Government Inspector moreover, two years ago, condemned the room, and threatened to impose a fine unless better accommodation was prepared. At the last year's examination he waived the fine on being assured that plans were prepared and that a building was about to be erected. The Infant School is the source whence the large School draws the majority of its scholars, and must therefore be well sustained if the latter is to be a continued success.

" The Finance Committee have gone thoroughly into the question, and a feeling existing generally that whilst building an Infant School, it would be well also to erect a Lecture Room (which has been so long needed), they agreed to accomplish both objects at the same time. To do this a sum of about £3,000 will be required. The Committee will be obliged, if you have already promised a subscription, if you will kindly pay the same on or before 30th June next; if you have not yet promised your subscription, will you kindly do so on the Form annexed? The Committee would also suggest that, if you think it desirable, payment may be extended over a period of FIVE YEARS; but that as much as possible be paid on or before the 30th of June next."

On December 28th, 1880, a tender was accepted for the making of the Classrooms in the Sunday School.

In March, 1881, the following resolution was carried unanimously at a meeting of the Church and Congregation :—

“ Believing as a principle that all educational projects ought to be carried on by a School Board, this Committee is desirous of knowing whether the Bolton School Board is anxious to receive offers of schools in this town.”

An arrangement was entered into and the final proceedings of the Day School Committee were confirmed on March 31st, 1881, and a draft lease was arranged on April 28th, 1881.

The Bolton School Board continued the work of the School until 1897, when the scholars and teachers were transferred to a more commodious building at Clarence Street Board School.

On Saturday evening, April 7th, 1888, a Re-union was held to celebrate the 25th Anniversary, when about 300 teachers, scholars, and many of the older connected friends, sat down to tea in the schoolroom. After tea a meeting was held in the Lecture Hall. B. Cole, Esq., the Superintendent, in the chair, and speeches were made by Messrs. James Lever, Joseph Taylor, W. F. Tillotson, J.P., James Scrimgeour, James Atherton, John Davenport, John Thomasson, and W. N. Birchby. The various speakers gave a *resume* of the history of the School, and their individual connection with it, explaining how the old Church and Schools at Duke's Alley were found inadequate to the increasing numbers, the opening of the Lark Street Mission School, and the subsequent removal to the present building.

CHAPTER XXX.

SCHOOL MEMORIALS.

School Clock—Electric Lighting—Day School Given Up—Mr. Joseph Thornley—Mr. B. Cole—Mr. Fred Cooper—Alderman J. T. Cooper.

The clock in the School is a gift to the School, and bears the following inscription :—“ The gift of John Manchester to the Day and Sunday Schools, Congregational Church, St. George's Road, A.D., 1866.”

In accordance with notice previously given by Mr. A. Isherwood, on December 21st, 1896, his motion to light the



The late MR. B. COLE.



The late MR. F. COOPER.

School with electricity was considered, and as this was seconded by Mr. J. Atherton, the details were left with the sub-committee after the same was passed.

On April 12th, 1897, tenders were considered for lighting the School and Lecture Hall with electricity, and a sub-committee appointed for the purpose of taking into consideration the requirements of the School after the School Board had given up the use of the premises as a Day School.

The premises seem to have been given up about October of this year, and the School Board made an allowance for depreciation of school furniture.

In March, 1904, Mr. Joseph Thornley, who had been Secretary of the School for 17 years, tendered his resignation. He was well respected by both Teachers and Scholars, and it was with great regret that the Teachers were called upon to accept his resignation.

An interesting gathering was held on Sunday afternoon, March 4th, 1906, when a Portrait and Memorial Tablet, erected by the Teachers and Scholars, was unveiled to the memory of our late beloved Superintendent, Mr. Benjamin Cole. The School was crowded to its utmost capacity with past and present Sunday School scholars and friends, showing a striking testimony to the veneration and love cherished for the memory of the deceased gentleman, and the service will be a memorable one to many.

The inscription on the Tablet reads as follows :—

“ This tablet is erected by the Teachers and Scholars in affectionate remembrance of Mr. Benjamin Cole who for 29 years was the Superintendent of this Sunday School, as a token of their love and esteem, and in appreciation of his Christian character and faithful service.

“ 1873—1901.

“ Dated March 4th, 1906.”

A further memorable ceremony was the unveiling of a Memorial Portrait in the Sunday School of one of our most honoured school workers, Mr. Fred Cooper, on August 1st, 1909.

The picture, a strikingly faithful portrait of the deceased gentleman, is placed on one of the walls of the Sunday School side by side with that of the late Mr. Benjamin Cole, a faithful fellow worker in the Sunday School along with Mr. Cooper.

The Rev. G. Barber, Pastor, presided, and after the singing of the hymn "In the Cross of Christ I Glory," prayer was offered by Mr. Reg. Kirk. The chairman was accompanied on the platform by Miss Atherton, Miss Ramsden, Mr. John Horrocks, Mr. T. Picken, Mr. R. Kirk, Mr. C. Beswick, and Mr. A. Thomasson. The Chairman, introducing the business of the afternoon, said they were met to honour the memory of Mr. Cooper, who was once a scholar at the School, then secretary, then teacher, and afterwards superintendent. He was one of the noblest sons of St. George's Road. They had had in connection with the School, men who had been a great honour to the influences that had played about that place, and Mr. Cooper was one who went into the world revealing by his life, conduct, and character, the influences that had operated at that School. Mr. Cooper was inspired with the belief that life was a noble calling and not something that was unworthy, to be shuffled through as best they could, but an elevated and lofty destiny. He gave of his best to that Sunday School, and his life's work was consecrated there.

After a scripture reading by Mr. John Horrocks, one of Mr. Cooper's former scholars, an address was given by Miss Ramsden, of the Primary School, who had worked long with Mr. Cooper, an association of which she spoke as one of the greatest joys of her life. Miss Ramsden referred to Mr. Cooper's faithfulness in all he undertook ; he was a strong Christian and the children's friend, delighting at all times to make them happy.

Miss Atherton, who had undertaken to unveil the portrait, said that as one who had known Mr. Cooper to the very last, she could speak of his true Christian character. He had filled every position in the School and the Church with honour. She trusted many in the School would, looking upon the picture, be inspired to take up the work that he had relinquished, and would follow in his steps. She then unveiled the portrait, which bore the following inscription :—

"In affectionate remembrance of Mr. Fred Cooper, and in sincere appreciation of his life and work in connection with this Sunday School, August 1st, 1909.

Mr. Albert Thomasson, one of the Superintendents of the Kay Street Mission, and a former scholar in Mr. Cooper's

class, voiced the sentiments of Mr. Cooper's scholars as he spoke of their former teacher's sympathetic patience, his method, his earnest, strong affection, and the belief he infused in their minds as to his genuine Christian character. Mr. Cooper's life was an inspiration to self sacrifice and self consecration in the Master's service.

During the afternoon the choir sang the anthem "Abide with Me," and the service concluded with the singing of the hymn written by the late Mr. Joseph Taylor, a former Superintendent of the Sunday School, commencing, "God Bless Our Sunday School," and the Benediction.

It has often been said that many of the best of the members of our town churches come from the villages. Mr. Fred Cooper is a case in point. Born at Charlesworth in the picturesque county of the Peak, where the battle of "Church Rates" for that particular village was fought by Mr. Fred Cooper's grand uncles over half a century ago, Mr. Cooper belongs to a family of yeomen farmers who have made their home for generations in the neighbourhood of this Derbyshire village. They have been distinguished for their love of religious liberty, and their attachment to the venerable sanctuary at Charlesworth, where William Bagshaw, the "Apostle of the Peak," preached the Gospel more than two centuries ago.

Springing from such a worthy stock, Mr. Fred Cooper has recognised and fully honoured the proverb: *noblesse oblige*.

Coming to Bolton in the year 1866, when but twelve years of age, the family settled here and forthwith connected themselves with the St. George's Road Church, where they remained.

Our friend found his first situation as a junior clerk at the Bolton County Court, being afterwards articled to Mr. John Greenhalgh, accountant, of this town. He subsequently qualified as a chartered accountant, and after about two years' independent practice he joined in partnership with the late Mr. Adam Ferguson, a former deacon and superintendent at Duke's Alley and St. George's Road. A man of character and professional ability, he met with large success in his vocation, and soon became head of a prosperous business.

From the first his deeply religious spirit showed itself. As

a Sunday scholar he was punctual and attentive, and ere long he was marked out as one fitted to wield the secretarial pen with credit and efficiency. His services were also enlisted in the administration of the various societies connected with the School, and there is hardly any post which he did not fill at one time or another, all of which he discharged with competence and devotion. After holding the office of School Secretary for about four years, he relinquished the same of his own accord, in order to take up the more arduous duty of teaching a class of young men. The Superintendents at this time, Mr. B. Cole and Mr. D. Ottewill, were somewhat at a loss for a suitable teacher for this class, but to such a Christian worker as Fred Cooper, their need, and his own ability to meet that need, sufficed to determine the duty. He took the class, and taught it for twelve years, fulfilling the task as the successful and much-beloved teacher, counsellor, and guide of those who placed themselves under his care. He then became a Superintendent in the Sunday School, his colleague being Mr. Benjamin Cole, a particular and intimate friend. This office he retained for six years.

It would be difficult to mention any good work in connection with the Church or School during the time he was connected with it, in which he has not borne an active part, even up to the time of his death. The excellent spirit with which he was possessed, a spirit of wisdom and understanding, of counsel and might, of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord, was conspicuously shown at St. George's Road during the interval between the resignation of Mr. Wolstenholme and the appointment of Mr. Barber. At that time a Deacon of twelve years standing, he proved himself to be a most efficient lay pastor. His friends bear witness that a large proportion of the care of the Church fell upon his shoulders, and to his judgment, tact and devotion, its various institutions were indebted for the health and vitality they enjoyed throughout that long and trying time.

An admirable feature in Mr. Cooper's character was his Christian enterprise, coupled with great powers of initiative and organisation. His School and Church did not monopolise the interest and the efforts he put forth on behalf of local Congregationalism. It is now many years since, in conjunction

with the Rev. J. R. Wolstenholme, whose memory is affectionately cherished amongst us, Mr. Cooper proposed to start a cause in the Chorley Old Road district. Though failing to secure the adoption of his project by the Church, they succeeded in inducing their fellow workers to join hands in the founding of the Kay Street Mission, which flourishes to-day under the charge of Mr. Calder, and which profited considerably by the sympathy and support of Mr. Cooper.

Not deterred by his set-back he worked patiently on, and eventually the more ambitious undertaking in the Victory district was fairly launched under the auspices of the Council, our friend having planned and worked for it as a parent for his child. He was not merely a man of affairs, but was ever ready to use both voice and pen in the prosecution of such work as he took in hand. In the pulpit, on the platform, and in various other ways, he spoke forth words of truth and soberness, and did it well.

Much hearty testimony has been borne to Mr. Cooper's high qualities as a Christian and a friend by all who knew him personally, and his benevolence made him a succourer of many, who in time of their need ever found ready access to his sympathy and helpfulness. His modesty, his refinement, his manliness, and above all, his profound convictions, won for him a power for good which it is not easy to estimate.

One of his most respected colleagues in the Congregational Council said of him : "Congregationalism had no more loyal son, nor the cause of Christ a more sincere and useful servant in Bolton than Mr. Fred Cooper was." He has gone, but his memory remains ever dear, and his works live after him.

It is not everyone's privilege and honour to record thirty-one years' service, teaching in a Sunday School. Mr. J. T. Cooper, brother of Mr. Fred Cooper, has this honour, being elected a teacher in our School on June 16th, 1872, and resigned in 1903. The number of young men in the town, and those who have had perforce to leave the town, testify even at the present time to Mr. Cooper's ability, the good influence he has exercised over their lives, and the sound Christian truths he taught. This has made itself manifest by the number of young men who have passed through his hands, and who are holding responsible positions in the town at the present time,

and are still carrying on Christian work in other Sunday Schools and Churches.

Alderman J. T. Cooper was born in October, 1852, at Charlesworth, near Glossop, in North Derbyshire, and was educated at Wesley School, Glossop, and privately. He came to Bolton in 1866, and in the following year entered the office of Mr. William Ramwell, of Bolton, solicitor, with whom he remained for about five years, having for a fellow worker, during a portion of this period, Ex-Alderman Fielding.

Mr. Cooper then became associated with the late Mr. Jos. Gerrard, one of the most respected of Bolton's solicitors, and with whom he served his articles of clerkship, and was admitted as a solicitor in February, 1879. He commenced practice on his own account, and on the death of Mr. Gerrard, succeeded to his practice. Some years afterwards, on the death of Mr. William Dowling, Mr. Cooper, along with Mr. Dowling's nephew (Mr. Arthur Hamer), acquired Mr. Dowling's practice, which they still carry on.

In November, 1891, Mr. Cooper entered the Town Council as member for Exchange Ward, and has continued to represent the Ward ever since.

He has served on the Waterworks, Technical Instruction (now Education), and Finance Committees, and also served on the Committee which carried out the extension of the Borough in 1898, and also on many other committees of a special character. He has, however, been, and is still, mainly associated with the Waterworks Committee, of which he became Vice-Chairman eight years ago, and Chairman three years ago.

He was associated with the scheme of obtaining the additional supply of water from Belmont from its inception, and saw the scheme through Parliament two years ago. Since then he has been actively engaged in the work of acquiring the necessary lands, and hopes to see the first reservoir commenced before many months are over. The scheme contemplates a supply of water for Bolton and district of from 40 to 50 years.

Mr. Cooper has been an Overseer of the Parish of Bolton from the time when the committee obtained the power to appoint Overseers, and for the last seven years has been annually re-elected Chairman of that body.



ALDERMAN J. TYAS COOPER, J.P.

On the formation of the Guild of Help, he at once gave it his hearty support, and is District Head of one section of Derby Ward.

In December, 1906, he was placed on the commission of the Peace for the Borough.

The Council Chamber in the Town Hall at noon, on Tuesday, November 9th, 1909, presented a remarkable scene, befitting the unusual importance of the occasion—the formal election to the Mayoralty of the Borough of a Liberal for the first time for 40 years. When the Town Clerk announced that the next business was the election of Mayor, Councillor Rimmer rose, and said he was about to move a resolution which he thought would meet with the approval of all. He would like to refer first to the unique position. That was the first time a member of the dominant party had moved for the position of Mayor a gentleman of the opposite party which was in the minority. It was the first time also in 41 years that a gentleman from the minority had consented to act as Mayor. He was pleased that the party to which he belonged recognised that there could be and were on the opposite side gentlemen and merit they ought to honour. The resolution he had to move was that Counc. J. T. Cooper "be, and is hereby, elected Mayor for the ensuing year." A more worthy citizen than Mr. Cooper he thought Bolton never had, and it would be a tribute to his excellent work on behalf of the town if they elected him to the position of chief magistrate and citizen.

Dr. Thornley seconded, and paid a high tribute to the service which the legal knowledge and ungrudgingly-given time of Mr. Cooper had been to the Corporation. Councillor Tootill supported on behalf of the Labour Party.

Of Mr. Cooper's services as Mayor of Bolton, for two years, nothing need be said ; they are too recent to be forgotten, and too much impressed by their fitness on the memory of all. We in a measure are participants in his honours, owing to the fact of his connection with us. He is, however, not the only Congregational Mayor that has served Bolton, for Mr. Thomas Gregson, of Duke's Alley, was Mayor in 1843-4, and Mr. Thomas Cullen, 1841-2. Mr. Cooper's period of service as the Mayor of Bolton was 1909-10-11.

CHAPTER XXXI.

NEW SCHOOL SCHEME.

Effort as Part of Jubilee Celebrations—First Meetings for this Object—Site Recommended—Failure to Purchase—Schemes Considered—Adjoining Land Bought—Appeal for Funds for Land Purchase—Further Appeal for Building Fund.

One of the most satisfactory ways of celebrating the Jubilee of the Church and School is the provision of an entirely New School in order to meet the growing wants of present and future generations of scholars. This idea is not a new one, but like most other ideas, has had to grow and develop with time. It will, therefore, be of interest to trace out the steps that have been taken with this object in view.

On March 2nd, 1896, a letter was received from the Secretary of the Sunday School by the Deacons, intimating that at a Meeting of the Teachers on February 16th, 1896, the following resolution had been adopted :—

“ That the teachers desire urgently to represent to the Church the necessity for early steps being taken to provide a New School.”

Also intimating that a deputation had been appointed to wait on the Deacons to lay these claims fully before them.

The Meeting took place on March 9th, 1896, when eight teachers attended to lay the claims of the School before the Deacons. The following were elected as the deputation to represent the Teachers to the Deacons, in reference to the above resolution :—Miss Mason, Miss Stephenson, Miss Ramsden, Mr. John Taylor, Mr. W. Farrington, Mr. Pugsley, and the Secretaries. This deputation had an interview with the Deacons, who promised them their support and sympathy with the object in view.

Mr. John Taylor advocated new buildings, but had no scheme.

Mr. Pugsley and Mr. C. Lomax also spoke in favour of better accommodation, pointing out that to some of the young men it was the only opportunity they had of religious instruction, since they do not attend the services of the Church.



SUPERINTENDENTS, OFFICERS, AND TEACHERS
OF SENIOR CLASSES.



SUPERINTENDENTS AND TEACHERS OF PRIMARY
DEPARTMENT AND JUNIOR CLASSES.

Mr. Joseph Thornley and Mr. Reginald Kirk, the School Secretaries, spoke as to the loss of time incurred through classes having to go into the Church and Lecture Hall, and the great difficulty of teaching in the open school, also referring to the great need for more class rooms.

After the deputation had retired, the matter of new School accommodation was fully discussed, and eventually Mr. Fred Cooper moved and Mr. Cole seconded : —

“ That the matters now on hand, cleaning, lighting, and heating the Church, together with new hymn and chant books be proceeded with during the present year, and that a sub-committee be appointed to formulate a scheme for a new School, with power to employ an architect to advise in the matter, and report to a further meeting as early as practicable. That we recommend the same to the Church and Congregation, and suggest the following names as the sub-committee: the Rev. George Barber, Messrs. B. Cole, F. Cooper, James Atherton, D. Ottewill, W. I. Bromiley, H. Haywood and Joseph Thornley.”

At the following Annual Meeting of the Church and Congregation, held on March 11th, this subject was brought before the members, who received it with enthusiasm, and they, on the motion of Mr. F. Cooper, seconded by Mr. J. F. Warbrick, approved of such resolution, with the understanding that the appeal for funds be deferred until the whole scheme had been fully considered.

A sub-committee was appointed to consider the feasibility of a New School. This Committee had several meetings to consider the project, but as they were crippled for the want of a site, it was decided to leave the matter over until there was some land available, and a Sites Committee was appointed to keep a look-out for anything that might be suitable.

On August 5th, 1896, the question of providing increased School Accommodation was considered again, when Mr. D. Ottewill and Mr. W. I. Bromiley, as members of the sub-committee appointed to look into this matter, reported that plans had been drawn for reconstructing the Lecture Hall so as to provide 20 classrooms and otherwise render it suitable for school purposes ; but it was found that there would not be space to accommodate the number of scholars for which it was proposed to provide. They therefore recommended the appointment of a Committee consisting of Messrs. B. Cole, F. Cooper, J. Atherton, and H. Haywood, who should quietly look out for a suitable site and report to a future meeting. This

was agreed to, and the gentlemen named appointed for the work.

In October, a piece of land which we had made inquiries about in 1896, viz., Galloway's Brassworks, in Bark Street, was advertised for sale. The Sites Committee was called together, and, after considering the matter for some time, they recommended the site to the Finance Committee as being feasible and suitable. They also propounded a scheme by which, even if the Church and Congregation could not see their way to commence building a New School at once, the land could be bought and retained by various guarantors, on behalf of the Church, at little expense to the Church, until it was required for use, and even if it were not put to use by our Church, the land could have been resold and nothing lost.

A special meeting of the Finance Committee was called three days afterwards, and Mr. Barber, who was in the chair, explained the object of their meeting, and he also said that he had consulted the Deacons over the matter, who, though they had passed no resolution, were of opinion "it was impracticable." The Finance Committee talked over the subject for some time, and ultimately they seemed to be of opinion that they had no jurisdiction in the matter. The sale of the land took place, and as we took no steps to secure this, it passed into other hands, and we allowed to slip an opportunity which we shall never have again—in more ways than one. The efforts and time given by gentlemen who served on the Committee, also by gentlemen giving professional assistance, were thus rendered futile.

The Rev. George Barber, on behalf of the sub-committee appointed to deal with the matter, reported that Mr. J. Atherton had been requested to furnish plans for the erection of a New School on the site of the present Lecture Hall and adjoining land. This was on December 13th, 1897.

The matter stood in abeyance until June 28th, 1899, when a letter was read to the Deacons from the Secretary of the Spinners' Association, intimating that they were prepared to consider an offer for a portion of the vacant land next to the Lecture Hall. Mr. Ottewill was therefore deputed to ask them to state the price per yard at which they would sell. Several other meetings were held at various times, and on

November 2nd, 1908, a special Deacons' Meeting was called in response to a letter from the Sunday School Secretary, which stated : " That a date should be arranged for the Teachers to meet the Deacons and Minister, to confer with reference to the general cramped condition of the School."

The Superintendent and the Teachers turned up in full force at this meeting, and after considerable discussion the following resolution was moved by Mr. Picken, seconded by Mr. Fletcher, and supported by Miss Mason :—

" That the Minister and Deacons of this Church be asked to consider the question of a New Sunday School and the immediate purchase of the land adjoining the Lecture Hall, and that they will bring the whole matter before the Church and Congregation at the earliest possible convenience."

The meeting was adjourned until November 4th, 1908, when the above resolution was again discussed, and it was decided that " the land in question ought to be purchased at the lowest possible price at which it could be obtained, and that the Finance Committee be requested to see that immediate steps be taken to this end, and that in our opinion Messrs. H. Haywood and D. Ottewill should be appointed to interview the Spinners' Association."

A special collection on the second Sunday in December was arranged for, before which a circular appealing for subscriptions from the members of the Church and Congregation was issued.

On the recommendation of the Finance Committee that the land be purchased from the Spinners' Association at the sum named without any alteration in the ground rent, the Deacons decided on April 28th, 1909, that Mr. T. Picken should move the resolution and Mr. Haywood second it at the meeting of the Church and Congregation. The result was, it was unanimously resolved to purchase the land adjoining the Lecture Hall for the purpose of the erection of a New Sunday School, the sum named being £950, and the matter was delegated to the Finance Committee to deal with, an appeal being issued as follows :—

" The Committee have now the pleasure of informing you that the purchase has been completed, subject to the confirmation by the Cotton Spinners' Association, from whom the land is being obtained. It is therefore necessary to appeal for the above sum, and we do so with every confidence, feeling that you fully recognise the great need for larger and better buildings

in which to carry on our work, not only on Sunday, but during the week. Were the appeal made for work on Sunday only, we should not have nearly the same confidence in approaching you, but there is a great work to be done during the week on Institutional and Social lines, and it is mainly for this that we require up-to-date and adequate accommodation.

"Our Sunday School is growing considerably, and we hope before long to have increased our scholars by more than a hundred, so that there is every prospect of having, if we go forward, a larger School than ever in the history of St. George's Road. We feel this to be the day of our opportunity, and we are anxious that it should not be allowed to slip by unheeded. We are delighted to hear that our friends in the Sunday School hope to raise at least £250 towards the Fund, and we greatly commend their zeal and enthusiasm."

Mr. Alfred E. Holt was elected Treasurer of the Fund.

It was desired that the above amount of £950 should be raised by special subscriptions independent of the Bazaar, and that the Bazaar proceeds be devoted to the removal of the debt, and the beautifying of the Church, and whatever was over to be allocated to the New School Fund.

A deputation was also appointed to wait upon Sir W. H. Lever with respect to the proposed New School; and on May 25th, a letter was read from that gentleman, in which he promised £1,000, this being one-seventh of the whole cost of the scheme proposed. A reply was sent him offering our hearty thanks for his generous promise.

On July 28th, 1909, our offer for the purchase of the land adjoining the Lecture Hall was accepted by the Operative Spinners' Association, and we therefore again acquired land which had once before been in our possession before the school was projected.

During the year 1910, nearly £300 was raised in the School towards the purchase price of the land required for the New School premises, and the Teachers and Scholars are to be congratulated on the magnificent response they made to the appeal issued on behalf of this object.

The transfer of the land from the Spinners' Association took place in March, 1910, and it was intended to proceed with the scheme during 1912, but, owing to various causes, it was thought advisable to delay the taking of any further steps for another year. Sufficient funds have now been received and promised to justify the new school committee in proceeding with the erection of the building, and efforts are still being put forth to obtain the amount required.

" The St. George's Road School is, therefore, again putting its hand to the project of providing new school buildings. Two years ago a successful bazaar and some generous contributions provided funds, and the land was purchased. Then came a pause; then the inevitable question, what good is the land unless it be used? Now a Committee, representing the various organizations of both Church and School, has been formed to devise the best means of bringing the scheme to fruition. The new School is an urgent necessity, for lack of accommodation is crippling the work.

" The Committee in charge of the scheme for building new Schools for the St. George's Road Church has been hindered during the past summer, by causes beyond its control, from making much progress with its work; but the Committee is in earnest, and the work imperative. Experts are being consulted as to the best type of building for modern requirements, and the Committee anticipate that it will soon be in a position to advise the Church upon the particulars of the scheme. About a third of the required amount has already been promised, and steps are to be taken very shortly, which, it is hoped, will bring the balance within sight."

The next step forward was made at a Meeting of the Church and Congregation held on March 14th, 1912, when it was unanimously decided to proceed with the erection of a New School on the land available for that purpose, and the following appeal issued:—

" The present School was erected fifty years ago, while it is over thirty years since the Lecture Hall was built, and you will at once realise that there is great need for new premises, so that the work of the Sunday School may be conducted on the most efficient and up-to-date lines, and adequate accommodation be provided for all the other organisations connected with the Church.

" To carry the scheme through successfully it is estimated that a sum of £6,000 will be required, and the Committee earnestly desire that the whole of this amount may be either paid or promised before the work is begun.

" April 3rd, 1913, is the Jubilee of the opening of the School and Church, and a most appropriate way of celebrating the occasion would be to raise the requisite amount to justify the Committee in proceeding with the work at an early date.

" The New School Committee have every confidence in appealing for the necessary funds, and on their behalf we earnestly ask your generous assistance, and should be glad if you would indicate on the attached form the amount you would be willing to subscribe.

" The following amounts have already been received or promised:—

	£	s.	d.
" Received from the Land Fund	525	0	0
" Miss Mason	200	0	0
Promised by Sir W. H. Lever, Bart. (balance of gift of £1,000)	850	0	0
" The Exors. of the late Mr. Fred Cooper ..	250	0	0
" Mr. and Mrs. A. E. Holt	250	0	0
" Mr. and Mrs. W. I. Bromiley	100	0	0

		£	s.	d.
Promised by	Mr. and Mrs. Thos. Picken	100	0	0
" "	Mr. and Mrs. John Ormrod	100	0	0
" "	Mr. and Mrs. C. V. Thompson	100	0	0
" "	Mr. Henry Haywood	100	0	0
" "	Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Sefton	80	0	0
" "	Mr. and Mrs. J. E. Sheppard	75	0	0
" "	Mr. James Nicholson	50	0	0
" "	Mr. F. L. Tillotson, J.P.	50	0	0
" "	Mr. A. Tyas Cooper	40	0	0
" "	Mr. F. E. Thomasson	25	0	0
" "	Mr. H. J. Robinson	25	0	0
" "	Miss Wain	20	0	0
" "	Miss Amy F. Holt	20	0	0
" "	Miss E. H. Archer	20	0	0
" "	Mr. James Bromiley	20	0	0
" "	Rev. H. Mudie, B.D. (1st promise)	10	0	0
" "	Miss Bromiley	10	0	0
" "	Mr. Charles Haywood	10	0	0
" "	Miss E. A. Nicholson (1st promise)	10	0	0
" "	Mr. L. Haslam do.	10	0	0
" "	Mr. R. Kirk do.	10	0	0
" "	Mr. F. Allcott	10	0	0
" "	Mr. Francis Fyles (1st promise)	6	0	0
" "	Mr. Albert Haslam do.	5	0	0
" "	Mr. James Haslam do.	5	0	0
" "	Miss A. Crook do.	4	0	0
" "	Mr. J. Stanley Banks	3	0	0
" "	Other friends	235	0	0
		<hr/>		
		£3,328	0	0

" Signed, on behalf of the Committee,

" H. MUDIE, President.

" W. I. BROMILEY, Vice-President.

" A. E. HOLT, Treasurer.

" F. ALLCOTT, Secretary."

This amount is now over £4,100. The amount raised in subscriptions by the Church towards this object to date is £840, and by the Sunday School £313, the amount voted by the Bazaar Committee was £250.

It is anticipated that the foundation stones of the new school buildings will be duly laid by January next.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS.

Re-union of Past and Present Members of Church and Congregation—Welcome by Mr. Mudie—Mr. Bromiley, the Oldest Deacon—Mr. Hetherington—Mr. Kirk—Speech by Sir William Lever—Shaw Trust—Sunday Morning Service by the Rev. W. Hardy Harwood—Sunday School United Service—Congratulations and Reminiscences of the Rev. W. Hope Davison—Evening Services.

The first of the jubilee celebration meetings was a re-union of past and present members of the Church and Congregation. The scheme for the permanent celebration of the jubilee of the Church and School is an ambitious one, viz., the erection of a new Sunday School on land adjoining the Lecture Hall and the Spinners' Hall on St. George's Road at a cost of £6,000.

The social tea party, which was well attended, took place in the Lecture Hall, after which another gathering was held in the schoolroom, presided over by the Pastor, the Rev. Howard Mudie, B.D., who was supported by Sir W. H. Lever, Bart., and Lady Lever, the Rev. W. Hope Davison, M.A., and Messrs. W. I. Bromiley (the oldest Deacon of the Church), J. Hetherington, and R. Kirk (Secretary).

Amongst a very numerous assembly were Ald. J. Tyas Cooper, J.P., Councillors J. E. Sheppard and A. E. Holt, and Messrs. W. Steele, J. H. Yates, J. W. Sefton, H. S. Atherton, T. Picken, J. Nicholson, J. Hulme, J. Nicholson, junr., C. E. Garn, W. Barlow, R. Cunliffe, H. Haywood, Jas. Harper, F. Isherwood, L. Haselden, and J. H. Smethurst. The meeting opened with an appropriate hymn, and prayer by the Rev. W. Hope Davison, son of the first minister at St. George's Road, after which Mr. Kirk read letters of apology for absence from the Rev. G. Barber (the last minister of the Church), Mrs. Wolstenholme (wife of a former minister), the Rev. S. M. Berry (son of another minister), and Mrs. Tillotson (who wrote from Thornton Hough and enclosed a cheque for £100). A resolution of hearty greeting and congratulation was sent from the Church at Chorley Old Road.

The Rev. Howard Mudie briefly welcomed those present, especially those who after long years spent away from Bolton and from that Church had returned to have another look at the dear old place and at the faces of those whom they had long known. They knew the Church still had their sympathy, well-wishing and prayers, and they welcomed them for all they had done to make that great Christian Church alive to lead Bolton men Godward. What they had done in the past those associated with the Church to-day must do. They must meet the new problems as well as the problems of the past were met ; indeed, they must meet them better because of the example of those others who had gone before them, and because they now had the assistance of the women of the church, of whose assistance the Church of 50 years ago denied itself.

Mr. W. I. Bromiley, the only member of the diaconate who was present at the opening of the Church, expressed the hope that after these jubilee gatherings the Church would be strengthened and encouraged for the supreme business of doing God's work. He spoke of the beginning of the Church with 107 members, of whom his grandparents were two, his grandfather being a deacon, and of the work which the Rev. W. H. Davison—who served the Church for 22 years, 10 in the present building—did in Bolton and at the Church. Mr. Bromiley spoke reminiscently of meetings which used to be held at which Mr. Davison gave addresses on ritualism which was rife in the Established Church at that time, and at which Mr. James Lever, the father of Sir William, used to preside. The Church, he said, had always been in the van of progress in the religious life of Bolton, and in 1895 it was one of five Churches with the largest congregation in Bolton.

Mr. J. Hetherington very pleasantly reviewed the history of the Church during his connection with it. He mentioned the various former ministers—the Revs. Davison, Berry, Wolstenholme, and Barber—and many former officers and workers, rousing many pleasant and tender memories in the minds of his hearers.

Mr. Kirk spoke of the indebtedness of the present generation to the faithful men and women of the past, and hoped their memory would be an incentive to the young men and

women of to-day to be as true as their predecessors had been. What that Church had done for Bolton no one could estimate. Amongst those who had worshipped there had been men who had taken leading positions in the commercial and civic life of the town, including chief magistrates. The Church had had its representatives sent to Parliament, and one of its sons had been deservedly honoured by the King. He also mentioned some past Sunday School workers, paying a tribute to their memory and work, and speaking of the new Sunday School he expressed the hope that they would soon have one of the finest schools in the country. In addition to £1,000 for the land, they had promised towards the scheme £3,834, of which £1,000 was actually paid, but they still needed more, and they hoped it would soon be forthcoming, so that the Committee might be justified in going on with the work. To raise the whole of it as a thank-offering for the past would be a most appropriate way of celebrating that jubilee. In calling upon Sir William Lever to address the meeting, the Chairman said that whatever might be said about Sir William in the House of Commons or outside by anyone, the people of Bolton and of Lancashire believed in him thoroughly and wholly, and all right-minded and true-hearted English people held in high esteem their great and good fellow-townsman.

Sir William, who was given a very enthusiastic reception, said the memories of himself and Lady Lever carried them back through all the years they were celebrating, and if they had been left out of that rejoicing they would have felt overlooked in a way that would have cut them very deeply. Fifty years ago he had his ears boxed in that room for talking, and he saw a lady in the room who was the daughter of the gentleman who did it. (Laughter.) And now they were asking him to talk. (Laughter.) The memory that carried them back over all those years was a priceless possession. By its aid they saw distant scenes irradiated and illumined by a warmth and beauty that present and nearer scenes could never possess. The year 1863 was, he continued, a very remarkable year in many ways. Besides that, one other Chapel and a Church were opened in Bolton—Park Street Wesleyan and St. Paul's Church, Deansgate. The year also witnessed the great distress of the cotton famine, and Mr. Davison, their Pastor at that time,

was to the fore in relieving it, helping to collect £4,000 to provide soup kitchens for the benefit of the 6,000 people who were out of work. The same year also saw the freedom of the slaves in America. The intervening 50 years had been a marvellous time, and had wrought great changes in the condition of Bolton, for which they were grateful, whilst it ought to make those of the present generation determine to carry on the progress. The whole of the development had come from invention: Samuel Crompton's spinning mule having raised Bolton from a town of 6,000 inhabitants to one of close upon 200,000. By enabling more to be made from the raw material, it had enabled the arm of Bolton to be long enough to reach the uttermost parts of the world, and in exchange for their products they received the products of distant countries which added to the happiness of everyone. At the beginning of last century the longest thread they could make from a pound of cotton was 100 miles in length, whilst now they could make a thread a thousand miles long from the same quantity, and the horse-power of machinery in Bolton to-day would represent the handiwork of millions of people as compared with the hand weaving and spinning of a century ago. All that invention had led to greater comfort, more leisure, and higher remuneration for the people, so that in the humblest cottage to-day there were luxuries that not even Solomon in all his glory, nor Queen Elizabeth, nor any monarch of the Tudor period enjoyed. In celebrating the jubilee of the Church they thought particularly of the grand men who had helped to build up the possessions they now enjoyed, and it ought to make them realise that their duty was to help to lift the present and coming generations to a higher state of civilisation and to greater enjoyment and comfort. After all, happiness was the beginning and the end and the all of existence, not the happiness of the quickly passing type that left sadness behind, but the enduring happiness of knowing that they had done their best and their duty. That was the end and aim of those who built that Church and of those who had carried it on, and it must be the end and aim of everyone in that meeting.

Mr. W. Steele (Hereford), a former Deacon of the Church, also spoke.

During the evening the choir, under the leadership of Mr.

F. Battle, very efficiently rendered a number of part songs, and a memorable meeting closed appropriately with the hymn, "O God Our Help in Ages Past."

The celebration was continued on Saturday night, when a re-union of past and present teachers and scholars took place. Mr. Thomas Picken presided, supported by Miss E. A. Nicholson, Ald. J. Tyas Cooper, J.P., Counc. A. E. Holt, Mr. F. Isherwood, and Messrs. F. Allcott and A. Fielden, superintendents; and F. Fyles and J. S. Banks, secretaries. After the opening hymn, "Stand up for Jesus," prayer was offered by Mr. Cooper.

The Chairman extended a hearty welcome to all past and present teachers and scholars. He considered the meeting held on Thursday and the present one as identical, for the Church and Sunday School ought not to be separated but thoroughly combined. He referred to the loyal and faithful band of teachers who had worked so consistently and with such great patience Sunday after Sunday, sowing the seed which had borne such fruit for the Kingdom. Many had passed away, while others in distant lands had carried with them the good impressions received in the Congregational School, Bolton. He referred to those who had served the school as superintendents and secretaries, tendering them thanks for faithful services rendered, especially alluding to the late Mr. Benjamin Cole and Mr. Fred Cooper, who gave of their utmost for the Sunday School. He appealed for support for the new officers of the School. The draft plans for the new Sunday School showed them the scheme for the new building which he considered a suitable memorial of the Jubilee of the Church and School on St. George's Road.

Miss E. A. Nicholson, one of the teachers, who was next called upon, eulogised the work of the five superintendents under whom she had served, and spoke of her happy associations with the School. They had great cause for gratitude to and reverence for the memory of those saintly men and women who in times gone by had seen the signs of the times, and had erected those buildings for the use of those of the following generation. They of the present day ought also to see the needs of the times. The present School was altogether inadequate for religious training of the scholars, affected as they

were by the changes which had taken place, and were taking place, consequent upon compulsory education, increased travelling facilities, holidays, old things giving place to new. Seeing that in modern education every point in a child's life was catered for, how could Sunday School work be efficiently done, if they were not properly equipped with facilities as in Day Schools. She appealed to Sunday School workers not to betray the trust reposed in them to carry on Christian work.

Mr. F. Isherwood, a former worker at St. George's Road, considered no School had a better record, and paid a tribute to the faithful men and women workers who had been true in their day and generation to the claims of Christianity. He appealed to the present generation to carry on the work which had been entrusted to them.

Councillor Holt appealed on behalf of the New School Scheme, a movement which had extended over a period of 29 years, but which did not fructify until the land adjoining the Lecture Hall came into the market. He reminded them that the successful life of a Church depended upon the children, the Church's greatest asset. Present-day education required up-to-date methods, and urged the necessity of Churches providing reasonable social recreation. He expressed the hope that the School would be opened free from debt.

During the evening songs were given by Mrs. J. Brown, Mrs. Callis, Mr. T. Banks, and Mr. W. Tunnah, Miss Dora Warwick recited, and Mrs. Nicholson acted as accompanist. The gathering, which was a very happy one, reminiscent and hopeful, closed by the singing of the hymn, "God bless our Sunday School," written by the late Mr. Joseph Taylor, a former superintendent at St. George's Road, and which is considered to be one of the finest prayers for Sunday School work that has ever been penned.

Many legacies have been left to the Church and School by former worshippers, and these are always a welcome memento of their connection with us. One such was left for the purpose of a new School over 30 years ago.

During Mr. Barber's time the Shaw Trust was formed by £250 left by Mr. E. Shaw to Mr. Barber, and £250 to Mr. Ottewill as Treasurer of the Church. This sum is invested, and the proceeds used for the Poor and Church purposes.

On Sunday morning and evening the pulpit at St. George's Road was occupied by the Rev. W. Hardy Harwood, of Islington, when there were good congregations. Preaching in the morning from the words, "My Father's hand," he referred to the work of St. George's Road Church during the last fifty years and the influence it had had upon the town and neighbourhood. He alluded to the time in the history of their religious life when they were forbidden the right of public worship according to their conscience, and were compelled to gather together in secret places and little cottages. Then came a time when Parliament said they were free to worship according to their consciences, and the little Bethels were erected as houses of God. The beautiful places of worship which now existed were made possible by the action of the brave souls who had preceded them. He appealed for generous offerings on behalf of the New School Scheme.

In the afternoon, in the Sunday School, a united service was held, when the Rev. W. Hope Davison, M.A., of Chorley Old Road Congregational Church, a son of the minister of the St. George's Road Congregational Church when it was opened fifty years ago, addressed the teachers and scholars. He incidentally narrated how the removal of the Church and congregation at Duke's Alley Church came about owing to the opposition of one of the trustees, when it was proposed to take land adjacent to the Duke's Alley building for the purposes of extension. The new superintendents, Messrs. Allcott and A. Fielden, commenced their duties, and Mr. Davison expressed his admiration of the inaugural address of Mr. Allcott, which he characterised as a straightforward declaration of hopeful import. After all, soul work was the secret of success.

A pleasing feature was the presentation by Mrs. Mudie, on behalf of the Women's Guild, of a bouquet of flowers to the two new superintendents, Mr. F. Allcott and Mr. Arthur Fielden. Miss A. Holt afterwards presented Mr. Davison with a bouquet on behalf of the Girls' Guild, and the proceedings terminated in the usual way.

Just before the close Mr. Davison said we were sadly neglecting the ladies in not recognising their most helpful services, and pointed out that in the annals of the School and Church there were many honourable women. Of these the

following names were very typical examples :—Mrs. Webster, Mrs. Cole, Mrs. Parkinson, Mrs. Rothwell, Senr., Mrs. J. Manchester, Mrs. J. T. Cooper, and in service in connection with the choir, Mrs. Barben, Mrs. Dykes, Miss Farrington, Miss Fox, and others.

In the evening the Rev. W. Hardy Harwood preached a powerful and impressive sermon on “ Self.” The collections amounted to £48 17s. 5d., making with the amount paid in, and promises received, £4,017 towards the £6,000 required.

Part II.

OTHER INTERESTS STARTED.

INTRODUCTION.

This section is not the history of St. George's Road Congregational Church alone, but is the history of the various churches which have come in contact with St. George's Road Church in any way, when they were started at first. No complete history of these churches has been issued as yet, and therefore I have deemed it best to bring their respective histories right up to the end of 1912, in order to prepare a starting point for any other histories of these places of worship which may hereafter be produced.

F. W. PEAPLES.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

ALBERT PLACE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH.

STARTING THE WORK HERE.

Mr. David Nimmo, Evangelist—Church Formed at Temperance Hall—Lease of Albert Place Land Obtained—Nimmo's School and Chapel Erected—Assignment of Land to Duke's Alley Trustees—Mortgage of Land—Mr. Nimmo called to London.

In the pursuance of their temperance and evangelical policy, the members of Duke's Alley Chapel encouraged and helped Mr. David Nimmo to come out as an evangelist. He was a member of Duke's Alley Chapel, and his name figures as a seat-holder in the list copied from the register of the early worshippers at this place. Very early on he gave promise of being a good worker and an earnest one, and in 1843, during the course of a successful Town Mission, which was supported by the Church and Congregation at Duke's Alley, Mr. David Nimmo was adopted as one of their agents for the promulgation

of the cause locally. His labours were crowned with success, and his sphere of work was removed to the Temperance Hall, and there a Church was eventually formed and met regularly for worship. Mr. Nimmo received an invitation to become the Pastor of this Church, and was ordained for the work as a Congregational Minister on April 14th, 1843.

The Congregation then established held together, and eventually an Indenture was made on the 5th day of December, 1845, in pursuance of an Act to facilitate the granting of certain leases between "Edmund Haworth the younger, of Little Bolton, in the County of Lancaster, gentleman, of the first part ; Samuel Heywood, of Tottington, Lower End, in the said County, gentleman, of the second part ; and the Reverend David Nimmo, of Little Bolton, aforesaid Minister, of the third part." It was usual then for the minister to take the title in a new venture of this kind, and Mr. Nimmo did this really on behalf of his Church and Congregation and with the help of certain gentlemen of Duke's Alley. This indenture was for the land on which Albert Place now stands, and a clause : "Doth hereby demise and lease unto the said David Nimmo his executors administrators and assigns all that parcel of land situate in Little Bolton," etc., gave rise to the term of "Nimmo's School" or "Chapel," which was so often used in the early days of this place. This deed was "taken and acknowledged at Great Bolton, in the County of Lancaster, by the within named David Nimmo, as his Act and Deed, and was by him desired to be enrolled on the 11th day of May, 1846, in Her Majesty's High Court of Chancery." It was first registered at Manchester, on 15th August, 1845.

On July 9th, 1846, the following resolution was received from the Church assembling at Albert Place, Little Bolton :

"That this Church expresses its grateful acknowledgments to the Deacons of Duke's Alley Chapel for their kindness on the late occasion of our Opening Services, in giving us the use of their Chapel, and also the various articles connected with our Tea Party."

The settlement of these preliminary matters enabled a Chapel to be erected, and a start was made. Mr. Nimmo, however, could not entirely hold this in his own hands and keep all things connected therewith going on a good basis, and therefore on the 1st of September, 1846, he

assigned the land to Mr. Thomas Barnes and others. This Deed is rather interesting from the fact that it establishes my assertion that this place was at first run on Congregational principles, though of course recognised as an Independent place of worship. This assignment was "of a parcel of Land and the Chapel thereon erected called 'Albert Place Chapel,' situate in Little Bolton, for the residue of a term of 1,000 years, upon trust for a Society of Protestant Dissenters called Pedo-Baptists or Independents." This was the term adopted by local Congregationalists at first. The Deed referred to was enrolled in Her Majesty's High Court of Chancery on the 23rd day of October, 1846, and reads:—

"This indenture, made the first day of September, in the year of our Lord, one thousand eight hundred and forty-six, between David Nimmo, of Little Bolton, in the County of Lancaster, minister, of the one part, and Thomas Barnes, of Farnworth, in the said county, Cotton Spinner; John Hamilton, of Great Bolton, Tea Dealer; James Lever, Grocer, of Little Bolton; George Edwards, of Little Bolton, Mechanic; Edward Rothwell, of Great Bolton, Warehouseman; James Fairclough, of Little Bolton, Boiler Maker; William Ashall, of Great Bolton, Watch Maker; James Cross, of Great Bolton, Cotton Spinner; Richard Baldwin, of Great Bolton, Shoe Maker; Alexander Mackie, of Little Bolton, Shopman; Richard Leigh, of Great Bolton, Chair Maker; Edmund Mason, of Great Bolton, Foundryman; and George Orrell, of Great Bolton, Blacksmith; and which several last mentioned are hereafter designated as the several Trustees."

All were more or less interested in Duke's Alley.

The clause relating to Albert Place Chapel states that "it is to be henceforth for the residue of the said term of one thousand years used as a place for divine worship according to the tenets and practice of Protestant Dissenters, who profess the principles of the Independent denomination as hereinafter expressed and declared, and do and shall from time to time and at all times hereinafter during the said term of years permit and suffer the officers or persons usually denominated Deacons for the time being of the society of persons who now do or shall or may hereafter assemble and worship at the said Chapel or Meeting-house pursuant to the trusts herein declared and expressed, and form themselves into a Christian Church or society according to the principles and in the manner usually adopted by the said religious society of persons."

This Deed clearly establishes the fact of the interest of Duke's Alley Church in the building and the supporting of Albert Place Chapel, and even the present-day worshippers at St. George's Road Church will be able to pick out the names of the Duke's Alley Deacons and supporters who are cited in it. The Church, however, was greatly in need of money for its work, and on the 5th of December, 1846, a mortgage was executed of the plot of land and the Chapel for the securing of £400 and interest. This transaction was between Mr. Thomas Barnes and others, and was made out to Robert Walsh, Esq.

For years the work went along without much interruption, until Mr. David Nimmo was invited to go to London. He accepted the invitation and left Albert Place.

The Rev. David Nimmo was born at Portsmouth, of Scottish parents, on November 23rd, 1814, and spent most of his childhood and youth in Edinburgh. About 1836 he was engaged by the Church at Duke's Alley as a town missionary, and fathered the Congregation which first met in the Temperance Hall. He was ordained as Pastor on April 14th, 1843, and in 1846-7 a Chapel was built for him by the Duke's Alley people, and named Albert Place.

In 1850, Dr. Massie, who was then secretary of the old Home Missionary Society, urged Mr. Nimmo to undertake some pioneer work in London. Accordingly he commenced in a small hall at Peckham, his first audience consisting of seven persons. His work here was beset with many difficulties, and at one time he was on the point of giving up the task; still he persevered, and on October 26th, 1859, "Clifton Church, Peckham," was opened for worship, only £400 of the cost being unpaid.

Enlargement soon became necessary, and then a further enlargement, and the Church thus established has continued until now, with many fluctuations, but always as a centre of gracious Christian influence.

In 1867, Mr. Nimmo resigned and went to Australia, where for five years he ministered to a Church in Victoria Parade, Melbourne.

He returned to England in 1872 or 1873, and in 1874 entered on his last pastorate at Monmouth, where he continued till 1880, when he retired. His later years were spent in or near London, and he died on the 20th of December, 1898.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

NEW INTERESTS.

Rev. James Rhys Jones—Fresh Assignment—Reform Movement—Its Effects—Albert Place Chapel sold to Wesleyan Reformers—New Interest Started—First Meeting of New Trustees—School Officers Elected—First Annual Teachers' Meeting Held—Making Use of Spare Land—United Methodist Free Church Formed—Wesley's Rules—Disruption—Uniting Conference.

On December 16th, 1852, a further Deed was executed in the form of an assignment of Albert Place Chapel and the plot of land to the Rev. James Rhys Jones and Mr. Thomas Evans, the principals being Mr. Thomas Barnes and the others.

This particular Deed cancelled the indebtedness of £400 to Robert Walsh, Esq., and also paid off £200 that was due to the various Trustees cited therein. The Rev. James Rhys Jones, with the support of Mr. Thomas Evans, of Duke's Alley, attempted to carry on the work here and bring it to a more successful issue. They even renamed the Chapel "Hope Chapel, Albert Place," and the work went along with more or less success at times, until finally the interest waned in 1857. Prior to this, however, another document was executed by the Rev. James Rhys Jones, Dissenting Minister, and Mr. Thomas Evans, flour dealer, on the 23rd day of April, 1853. This was in the form of an assignment to fresh trustees who figured largely at Duke's Alley Chapel at this time, and adds a little more evidence to the assertion that this Chapel was built through the instrumentality of Duke's Alley. It reads:—

"An assignment of the parcel of land and the Chapel thereon erected called Hope Chapel, Albert Place, upon trust for Protestant Dissenters to Mr. Thomas Beswick, Boot and Shoe Maker; Joseph Bradshaw, Book-keeper; Ralph Challinor, Grocer; John Haslam, Moulder; William Haslam, Manufacturer; James Hall, Overlooker; William Healey, Stonemason; William Cooper Jones, Brushmaker; William Laurie, Draughtsman; Philip Nuttall, Flour Dealer; John Proctor, Tailor and Draper; John Richards, Carter; and Peter Skelton, Draper."

The above were designated as the several trustee parties thereto.

We now approach the end of the Congregational connection with this Chapel which was originally erected for the ministry of the Rev. David Nimmo.

During the fifties the reform movement began to agitate the religious world, and made such headway in Bolton that it touched all denominations more or less.

The old Fletcher Street Chapel, which is now the School, was, however, the principal scene of the agitation, and several workers were expelled from the society worshipping there, for showing their sympathy with the reformers. Amongst these was Mr. James Hayes Raper, who afterwards became the popular agent and eloquent speaker for the United Kingdom Alliance. This gentleman eventually migrated to Albert Place.

In the year 1857, Albert Place Chapel was offered for sale, and Messrs. T. Briercliffe, J. Bommer, J. Chippendale, and T. Markland were appointed by the Church Committee at Hanover Street Chapel to ascertain whether Albert Place Chapel could be obtained on reasonable terms for the purpose of accommodating the increasing number of members who were residing in Little Bolton. This Sub-committee, with Mr. Raper, who had become the Church Committee Secretary, ascertained that by promptitude an arrangement of a favourable character could be made, and they therefore waited on the existing Trustees who met at Mr. Peter Skelton's, and made an agreement to pay £450 for the Chapel, and £10 for the Sunday School furniture. This agreement was finally carried out by Mr. T. Briercliffe advancing the money, and the property was conveyed to Trustees on behalf of the "Wesleyan Reformers" worshipping in Albert Place Chapel.

After erecting a wall and palisading at the front, the Chapel was opened for Divine Worship by the Rev. James Bromley, of Bath, on November 29th, 1857. Mr. Bromley preached both morning and evening, and the Rev. William Hope Davison, of Duke's Alley, took the afternoon service. Other services were preached during the week by the Rev. Marmaduke Miller, of Manchester, who was a very acceptable preacher, and the opening services were concluded on Friday, December 4th, 1857, by a sermon from the Rev. Arthur Mursell, of Manchester, in the Temperance Hall, from which

the Church originally started, and which was hired for the occasion as the Chapel was too small.

The first Trustee Meeting was held on July 19th, 1858, and Messrs. John Bommer, T. Briercliffe, James Webster, Charles Daniels, Edward Walch, John Chippendale, Thomas Pilkington, and J. H. Raper, were present thereat. All these have now passed away. A statement of accounts was presented by Mr. John Chippendale, who had accepted the office of Treasurer up to that time, and had settled on his own responsibility, and presented the receipts to the Trustees, of the debts that had occurred up to that time. For this noble donation it was resolved :—

“ That the best thanks of the meeting be given to Mr. Chippendale for his donation to the funds of the trust.”

He was further requested to retain the Treasurership of the Trust until the end of the year. Later Trustee meetings were attended by Messrs. A. Greenhalgh, J. Robertshaw, T. Markland, W. Burrows, W. Jessop, J. Kirkman, T. Hanesworth, M. Thornton, and W. Duxbury.

On December 6th, 1857, the following School Officers were elected, viz.:—Superintendent, Mr. John Bommer; Treasurer, Mr. T. Markland; Secretary, Mr. James Hayes Raper; Librarian, Mr. Alfred Gregory.

On December 6th, 1858, the first Annual Teachers' Meeting was held, at which 26 persons were present, Mr. Bommer being in the chair. The Secretary, Mr. J. H. Raper, reported that when the School opened in December of the previous year (1857), the scholars consisted of three boys and sixteen girls. After twelve months' work the numbers had risen to 120 names on the registers.

On March 26th, 1859, the question of how best to use the spare land in connection with the site came up for consideration, and the sub-committee that had been previously appointed to go into the matter reported: “ that the very best use the spare land could be put to was to build upon it ourselves in the most economical and respectable fashion.” A further resolution to interview the Borough Surveyor and see what class of house would be likely to be acceptable, was also carried.

On March 25th, 1861, the Reformers in Bolton amalgamated with the Wesleyan Associationists, and thus formed

what until recently were known as the United Methodist Free Churches.

As early as 1739, Wesley recognised the principle of United Methodist Societies, but it was not until 1743, at Newcastle-on-Tyne, that he drew up and published rules for these and other Methodist Societies which had been formed. A society was made up of like-minded persons who were seeking Christian Perfection.

The last serious disruption in English Methodism took place in 1849, and despite the many attempts made, the painful divisions continued for the long period of fifty-eight years. In 1906 the Union Committee was charged with the duty of adjusting all matters of administration and finance, and of procuring and enabling an Act of Parliament, and arranging for a Uniting Conference in 1907.

This Uniting Conference was held in London, and the Union having been formally consummated by a unanimous vote of the Conference, the Deep Poll of Foundation was signed by the President and by the Presidents of the Methodist New Connection, Bible Christians, and United Methodist Free Churches, thus making it possible for an Act to be framed to authorise the Union of these Churches under the name of the United Methodist Church, to deal with real and personal property belonging to the said Churches or denominations, to provide for the vesting of the said property in trust for the United Church so formed, and for the assimilation of the trusts thereof, and generally legalising the position all round.

CHAPTER XXXV.

TAKING LEGAL HOLD OF PREMISES.

New Albert Place Trustees appointed—Mortgage of Land Executed—Deed of Settlement—Day School Started—Amalgamation of Albert Place and Bowker's Row Churches—New School Built and Church Enlarged—New School Offered and Accepted by School Board for use as a Day School—List of Ministers—Superintendents—Secretaries—Trust Secretaries—Jubilee Trustees.

It was, however, not till the 19th day of December, 1861, that Messrs. Thomas Beswick and the others formally relinquished their trust on this place, and the Land, Chapel, and

School was formally transferred to Mr. J. H. Raper and the other trustees appointed, and by them accepted on behalf of the denomination who now worship here. Prior to this, however, in May, 1859, Mr. Briercliffe intimated that he would be glad to again have his money which he had advanced, and he approached Mr. Robinson, the printer, to see if he would advance money on a mortgage. When he consented, the Trustees agreed to a mortgage being effected on the Chapel ; and on the 9th day of September, 1862, Messrs. James Hayes Raper, of the City of Manchester, Agent ; John Bommer, of Little Bolton, Engineer ; Thomas Pilkington, of Little Bolton, Shopkeeper ; John Shipley, of Great Bolton, Earthenware Dealer ; John Chippendale, of Little Bolton, Painter ; William Duxbury, of Little Bolton, Joiner ; William Burrows, of Great Bolton, Weaver ; William Jessop, of Great Bolton, Mechanic ; Joseph Kirkman, of Great Bolton, Blacksmith ; James Webster, of Little Bolton, Gentleman ; Adam Greenhalgh, of Great Bolton, Shopkeeper ; Thomas Hanesworth, of Great Bolton, Hatter ; who were then the Trustees, mortgaged the Land, Chapel, School, and Premises in Little Bolton to Mr. Robinson, the printer, for £400.

On the 13th day of September, 1862, a Deed of Settlement was executed by way of declaration of trust of Land, Chapel, School, and Premises in Little Bolton, for the use of the United Methodist Free Churches. This was enrolled in Her Majesty's High Court of Chancery on the 13th day of October, 1862. This religious body was formerly called the Wesleyan Methodist Association, but was then called the United Methodist Free Churches.

Mr. William Robinson transferred his mortgage to Mr. John Fogg on March 11th, 1867.

In October, 1863, the School was let as a Day School to Miss E. B. Hanesworth, and later to Mr. Joseph Sutcliffe.

At a Special Trustee Meeting called on July 9th, 1880, a scheme for altering and enlarging Albert Place Chapel and erecting a New School as desired by the churches, was approved of, providing the cost could be met. An amalgamation of Albert Place and Bowker's Row Churches, was also mooted, and a new Deed agreed upon so that a number of new trustees could be appointed from Bowker's Row Church.

The first meeting of the new Trustees was held on March 30th, 1881, and in July, 1881, the amalgamation of Bowker's Row Chapel members with the Albert Place members was consummated. The Bowker's Row Chapel is now used as the Public Sales Rooms, having been sold and adapted for that purpose.

Before the amalgamation with Bowker's Row, Albert Place Church was a part of the Bolton Circuit which included Bowker's Row and Hindley Green Churches, and although Albert Place shared in the Ministerial services, Bowker's Row was really the head of the circuit.

After the amalgamation had taken place, the Church was then enlarged and otherwise improved, a new school built, and the union of the two Churches has resulted in great good to the cause.

On May 14th, 1881, the Trustees decided to offer the New School premises to the Bolton School Board for use as a Day School. This offer was accepted, and Mr. John Thornton, M.A., was appointed as master. A very satisfactory work was done here, but with the spread of new conditions and new teaching ideas, Albert Place was eventually closed after a few years' use for Day School work, and the scholars were transferred to the new Clarence Street School.

The following is as complete a list of the Ministers who have been stationed in the Bolton Circuit as it is possible for me to obtain from the existing records. All have done yeoman service at Albert Place.

Revs. C. R. Hopper; T. Rothwell, 1864-5; G. Stevens; Charles Edwards, 1866-68; George Smith, 1868-69; J. W. Worth, 1868-1872; John Collinge, 1870; J. W. Jones, 1870.

Superintendent Ministers:—Rev. J. A. Watts, 1872-4; with colleague, Rev. E. Evans, 1874. Rev. W. Patterson, 1874-1877; with colleagues, Revs. G. C. Percival, 1875; H. J. Weatherhead, 1876-7. Revs. J. Renshaw, 1877-8; E. D. Green, 1878-9; John Campbell, 1879-1883; E. F. Tonkin, 1883-1888; Isaac Ambler, 1888-1892; James Roberts, 1892-1896, with the Rev. Joseph Lineham and A. E. Boyer as his colleagues at Horwich. Rev. W. Edmonston, 1896-1900, with the Revs. F. Cook and W. B. Hoult, M.A., as Horwich colleagues. Rev. George Kilgour, 1900-1906, with the Revs. W. Bryars and W. Dawkins, G. Langley, and J. A. Newton, as his colleagues at Horwich. Rev. Thomas Letcher, 1906-1912, with the Rev. E. H. Smith as his colleague at Horwich.

The Rev. John Campbell, who is mentioned in the list, is the father of the Rev. R. J. Campbell, the present Minister of

the City Temple, London, and whose name has lately been so prominent before the public in connection with the doctrines of the "New Theology." This gentleman was a scholar at Albert Place School during the time of his father's ministry, and previous to his removal to Oxford.

The Rev. Isaac Ambler died in Bolton in May, 1892, during the time of his ministry at Albert Place, and whilst here, he displayed great enthusiasm for Home Mission Work, with the result that Salisbury Street Mission was started by Albert Place.

Material financial assistance was also given by Albert Place in the erection of Brunswick Chapel, Horwich.

The present minister at Albert Place is the Rev. H. Ward Kelley, who was appointed in August, 1912, to succeed the Rev. Thomas Letcher, who had removed to Dulwich, London.

The following gentlemen have filled the office of Superintendent of the Sunday School :—

Mr. John Bommer, 1857 to 1860, 1863 to 1867, 1869 to 1872.

Mr. Adam Greenhalgh, 1860 to 1863, 1867 to 1869.

Mr. John Bommer, who was the first superintendent, served for three different periods, as stated above. Mr. Adam Greenhalgh, the next, served for two periods, filling in the gaps vacant in Mr. Bommer's periods. It is probable that Mr. Bommer went on later than the date given, but as all records stop at 1872 for a long period, this cannot be determined.

Bowker's Row and Albert Place Schools amalgamated in July, 1881, and the first superintendents after this amalgamation were Mr. Baxter Bridge and Mr. John Miller, jointly, from 1881 to 1884. After this Mr. William Fisher Briggs, with Mr. William Jessop as the Assistant Superintendent, took hold of the reins from 1884 to March, 1886. From June 13th, 1886, to September, 1889, Mr. Samuel Greenhalgh fulfilled the duties as Superintendent, and then from September onwards acted as the co-superintendent with Mr. John Miller, who retained office until the death of the latter on Sunday, April 5th, 1891. After this, in 1891, Mr. Jonathan Cox joined Mr. Greenhalgh as co-superintendent, remaining in office until 1895, when Messrs. Henry Taylor and George S. Ikin, were appointed as joint superintendents. Mr. Henry Taylor died in

February, 1899, so he, too, served until death came, and Mr. George S. Ikin was after this the sole superintendent until about the year 1902, when Mr. Jonathan Cox was again appointed, and has held the position up to the present time. Mr. Robert Casson acted as co-superintendent a part of this time.

The first Secretary at Albert Place Sunday School was Mr. James Hayes Raper. He held office from December, 1857 to 1861, and from 1861 to 1865, Mr. William Duxbury served next. In 1865 two secretaries were appointed, Messrs. William Duxbury and Joseph Sutcliffe. These held this position until 1867, when Mr. Joseph Sutcliffe alone performed the duties of the office. As the minutes in possession of the School stop at 1872 for a long period, it is not exactly known how long this gentleman served. When the School was amalgamated with Bowker's Row, Messrs. Jonathan Cox and Samuel Greenhalgh were appointed as Joint Secretaries for the amalgamated Schools, their term running from May 30th, 1881, to September 21st, 1884. After this Mr. Samuel Greenhalgh with Mr. W. H. Eatock as assistant retained the office until October, 1886. When he relinquished the office, Mr. Jonathan Cox again acted in his place, with Mr. Eatock as assistant, until January, 1890. In February, 1890, Mr. W. H. Eatock took the secretaryship, with Mr. John Taylor as assistant, and both gentlemen served until September, 1896, when Mr. John Taylor was appointed the Secretary, with Mr. Robert Jackson the Assistant, up to 1901. In 1901, Mr. Walter L. Tootill became the Assistant Secretary and served until August, 1905, since then Mr. John Taylor has been the sole secretary right up to the present time.

The following is a list of the Albert Place Trust Secretaries:—James Hayes Raper, from 1857 to 1860; John Chippendale, from 1860 to 1864; Thomas Hanesworth, 1864 to 1866; William Duxbury, 1866 to 1881, when the amalgamation of Albert Place and Bowker's Row Churches took place in July, 1881; and at this time Messrs. William Duxbury and Richard Blackburn were appointed Secretaries, the joint meetings in the School taking place on this date. These gentlemen served until 1885. From 1885 to 1886, Mr. William Jessop was Trust Secretary; from 1886 to 1890, Mr. Joseph

Gregory ; from January 25th, 1890, to January, 1899, Mr. James Johnston Grant ; from January, 1899, to January 26th, 1909, Mr. Ralph Greenhalgh ; from January, 1909, to March, 1910, Mr. Robert Ramsden ; from March, 1910, to December, 1912, Mr. Walter L. Tootill. Mr. Edward Gregson is now the Trust Secretary.

The following is a list of the Jubilee Trustees of Albert Place Church :—Messrs. Jonathan Cox, David Yates, James Eatock, Samuel Greenhalgh, Henry Bommer, George Samuel Ikin, James Loftos, Thomas Cain, Elijah Eatock, John Seed, John Taylor, James Johnston Grant, Ralph Greenhalgh ; Mr. J. J. Grant was the Treasurer, and Mr. Ralph Greenhalgh, Secretary.

The following Trustees of the present building have died during their term of office :—Mr. Stanley Ridings, Mr. James Boylan, Mr. Robert Casson, Mr. James Casson, and Mr. William Duxbury.

Many of us will miss the genial presence and magnetic personality of Mr. J. H. Raper, who died in May, 1897. There were few men who were more welcome or more effective upon the Temperance platform than he. His racy speech was listened to with delight, and with his death the community lost a man of great personal influence, which was exerted with rare unselfishness for the public good.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

ALBERT PLACE CHURCH JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS.

MEMORABLE RE-UNION.

Reception—Old Workers—Reminiscences of Councillor Tootill—Love-feast—Salisbury Street Mission—United Churches—A Live Church.

The Meetings held at Albert Place Methodist Church and School in connection with the Jubilee Services on November 29th and 30th, and December 1st and 2nd, 1907, were a great success, and will long be remembered by those who participated in them.

In the afternoon, November 30th, at a reception of old scholars and friends, there was a very large gathering. Old scholars came not only from places immediately surrounding Bolton, but from the distant towns of Sheffield, Hull, Birmingham, Bristol, and Halifax. The visitors were received by the Rev. T. Letcher (Pastor), and Mr. H. Bommer (the oldest member of the congregation). A short service followed. Mr. G. S. Ikin opened with prayer, and the service was conducted by Mr. Letcher. At the close, tea was partaken of in the schoolroom by no fewer than 400 present and past scholars and members of the congregation. Many old acquaintances were renewed, and there were some interesting talks between friends who had not met for many years. Erstwhile members were not forgotten, for many portraits of those who had joined "the great majority" were exhibited in the schoolroom, and these recalled many incidents of interest. In the evening a most successful meeting took place. The gathering included four persons who were present at the opening of the Church—Mr. Bommer, who presided ; Mrs. Kay, sister to Mr. Bommer ; Mrs. Waddington, and Mrs. Greenhalgh. After singing and prayer led by the Revs. R. C. Ellison and T. Letcher, the Chairman delivered a short address. He said that not one of the first church officers was with them that night, but the work of good men and women lived after them—in fact, their work would never die. It was a happy idea to have had exhibited the photographs of old associates there, for these had brought many associations back to them. Many who found Christ at that Church were using their influence in other towns, and were trying to bring about a healthy and pure life in their midst. He wished god-speed to those who were thus working, and to others who were working in a quieter way.

Councillor R. Tootill, J.P., who followed, gave a few reminiscences extending over a period of 37 years. He wished the younger members of the congregation to be impressed with the importance of that celebration, as it was a reminder of fleeting time. Let them mark that jubilee by trying to promote the happiness of the people, for there was no work so satisfactory in its results as that of making others happy. Life was sweet if they would only try to make it so. All had

the capacity to do this, and he appealed to them to unite in promoting the public good, for this was demanded of them as a Christian duty.

Councillor Battersby, of Bury, an "old boy," expressed his pleasure at taking part in the celebrations, and trusted that the work of the Church would in the future receive His blessing.

Mr. I. Dearnley, of Stockport (son-in-law of the Rev. Isaac Ambler, a former pastor of the Church), addressed a few words to the young men, pointing out to them the great sacrifices made by those who erected that fine structure. They had entered into a glorious heritage, and a great duty rested upon them to carry on the work at that Church even more successfully than it had been in the past. Great changes were going on in the world, but sin was as ugly to-day as ever it was, and under these circumstances he appealed to the young men to be determined to hold to the grand and glorious truths which had been promulgated from the pulpit. He hoped that that celebration would be a red-letter day in their experience, and a day of reconsecration to the service of the Master.

At intervals the Chairman read letters from old scholars who have settled in America and Australia, these expressing the pleasure they would have felt could they have taken part in the celebration. A letter was received from Mr. James Campbell—brother of the Rev. R. J. Campbell—a former scholar, who wrote that he would "like to have been present to see them all again."

At the services on Sunday, the Rev. Jas. Roberts, of Bristol (a former Pastor), conducted worship, the morning text being, "A jubilee shall that fiftieth year be unto you," Lev. xxv., 11. In the afternoon, an ever-memorable lovefeast was held, when some wonderful experiences and reminiscences were given. Mrs. Hennifer, an old worshipper, who is now blind, gave the first testimony, and letters were read from old members in various parts of the world. The evening service commenced before the advertised time, Mr. Tom Entwistle, a former organist, officiated at the instrument, and Mr. Knowles, the choirmaster for the occasion, led the singing of the Te Deum. The evening subject was taken from the 71st Psalm, "Because Thou hast been my help, therefore under the shadow

of Thy wing will I rejoice." The services throughout the day were hearty and inspiring, and the offerings amounted to £91 10s. 9d.

Salisbury Street Mission, a branch from Albert Place, was opened on August 3rd, 1892, but previous to that time the friends had been working in a small mission room in Lupton Street for about three years, doing pioneer work. A few friends were in the first instance transferred from Albert Place Church to Lupton Street to work this mission.

On the 17th of September, 1907, the three denominational Churches joined together. These were the United Methodist Free Church, the Bible Christians, and the Methodist New Connection. After several years of careful thought, and prayerful consideration, on the part of the leaders and members of these Churches, they amalgamated, and became one denomination under the title of United Methodist Church, and accordingly the name was changed to United Methodist Church.

Albert Place is still doing a most useful work in the neighbourhood in which it is situated, upholding its great traditions, and still maintaining its attendance and interest in both School and Church. It is proving itself to be a live, spiritual Church, and many of its members are taking keen interest, and showing hearty sympathy and support to the various moral, social, and spiritual movements of our town.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

BANK TOP CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

Origin of School—Application to Duke's Alley—New School Opened—Help Rendered by Owner of Premises—Private Subscriptions Sought for the Work—Evening Services Started—New Class-room and Kitchen Built — Presentations — Robert Kay Memorial Service — Memorial Portraits.

To Mr. J. B. Parkinson must be given the credit for the establishment of the Congregational interest at Bank Top. He is always regarded there as the father of this Church. Certain it is that he was always greatly interested in its fortunes right up to his death in September, 1907, and always took the Morning Service at the Annual Sermons.



BANK TOP CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

The Methodists were, however, first in the field here, and started a small preaching station which kept going for a short time only. Eventually the interest gradually waned and finally went out.

Anxious for the spiritual welfare of the people residing in the model village of Bank Top, which was laid out for the comfort of his workpeople by the late Mr. Henry Ashworth, of the Oaks, he applied to friends at Duke's Alley Chapel for someone to continue the Sunday School at Bank Top. His application resulted in Mr. J. B. Parkinson, Mr. Daniel Haddock, and Mr. David Crossley, agreeing to take up the work, which they did with such earnestness that a School was quickly set going, and soon got on its feet in a small though earnest way. One of the residents of the village, Mr. Timothy Entwistle, used to tramp down every Sabbath day to the services at Duke's Alley Chapel, and, when they began to take an interest in this village, he very naturally transferred his patronage and services to the new School, and became an earnest worker in its early days. At first the School was started in the small Village School which is now used as the Police Station there. The School was first opened in March, 1855, and continued in the old building until the end of 1856, when the present School was opened by the holding of a Christmas Tree. Mr. J. B. Parkinson was always the central figure at these times.

Preachers attended at various times from Duke's Alley, or were provided by the friends there and at Farnworth, and Mr. David Crossley and Daniel Haddock also did their share of the necessary work. As a matter of fact, both Mr. Crossley and Mr. Parkinson kept up their connections with the place until the times of their deaths.

The Ashworths own the premises, and the family have always kept up a close connection therewith. They really have made it possible for the religious life and work of the community to go on and progress to its present-day excellence. Right from the very beginning has this interest in the Sunday School and Church been kept up, and still continues, for the people who worship there have the use of the School for nothing, neither paying any rent or rates, and up to the passing of the last Education Act in 1904 did not pay anything for lighting and heating. Truly a record such as this redounds greatly to

the credit of the family who have done so much for the good of their people, always in a quiet, unostentatious way.

When the work was nicely going, Mr. Parkinson began to try and broaden the interest of the Duke's Alley people in this new venture, and at the Church Meeting held in May, 1861, a proposal was made for the adoption of Ashworth Tops (Bank Top) as a preaching station. After a good deal of discussion, and in view of the fact that the Duke's Alley people themselves were preparing to move to new premises with greatly increased accommodation, it was finally decided "that as the funds of the Church show no signs of being able to bear any additional burden, private subscriptions be obtained for working Ashworth Tops for a few months as an experiment." This course was followed and kept up for many years, the preachers being obtained by the Deacons.

Supplies for Bank Top were arranged for by Duke's Alley during the whole of the year 1862, and on the motion of Messrs. Bromiley and Linton, it was agreed to supply Bank Top with hymn books, as requested by the people there.

The date of this resolution is April 8th, 1875. Afterwards the supplies of preachers were always arranged for by the Secretary of Bank Top up to the year 1906, when a Lay Preachers' Association was formed by the Congregational Council, who then supplied the preachers up to September, 1911, when the old practice was resorted to, and supplies are now arranged by the Secretary as formerly. The Executive Committee of the Council have the matter under consideration for the supply of the preachers in the future.

Right up to the year 1892, the preachers came in the afternoon only; the School Committee, however, considered it desirable that evening services should also be arranged for, and they were inaugurated in this year. From 1892 until the present time these services have been successfully continued.

On Saturday, September 3rd, 1898, a presentation was made to one of the teachers, Mr. Robert Entwistle, who had removed from the neighbourhood, and so severed his connection with the School. This took the form of a handsome writing desk, with the inscription:—

"Presented to Mr. Robert Entwistle, by the Teachers and Scholars of the Bank Top Congregational Sunday School, in recognition of his long services in the above School."

The presentation was made by the Superintendent, Mr. Robert Kay, speeches being given by Mr. Whitaker, Mr. Kerfoot, and Mr. J. H. Ashworth. Mr. Entwistle feelingly acknowledged the gift.

On Sunday afternoon, August 13th, 1899, the teachers and scholars took the opportunity of presenting Mr. Henry Kay with a handsome writing desk, on the occasion of his marriage, and also in recognition of his services as Secretary. Mr. John H. Ashworth took the chair, and Mr. William Whitaker made the presentation. Both gentlemen spoke in the highest terms of his valuable services as secretary, and also paid a warm tribute to his life and character. Mr. and Mrs. James Cheetham also spoke of the respect and esteem in which he was held, and the whole School were unanimous in their best wishes for their future welfare and happiness.

The desk bore the following inscription :—

“Presented to Mr. Henry Kay by the Teachers and Scholars of the Bank Top Congregational Sunday School, on the occasion of his marriage, as a mark of their esteem for services rendered as secretary during the past fourteen years. August 16th, 1899.”

Mr. Kay suitably acknowledged the gift.

One of the prominent workers here, Mr. Robert Kay, who was the Superintendent for 19 years, died on the 3rd of January, 1907, and his memorial service was preached on January 13th, 1907, by the Rev. Morgan Jones, of Egerton. As a further recognition of his services, the members of the Sunday School decided to have a Memorial Portrait of Mr. Robert Kay hung in the Chapel. This was subscribed for, and was unveiled on Sunday afternoon, May 24th, 1908, by Mr. G. H. Ashworth, M.A. At the service, Mr. Wm. Whitaker, Mr. J. H. Ashworth, and Mr. R. Abbott, also spoke in eulogy of the services which had been rendered by Mr. Kay.

The inscription on this portrait reads as follows :

In affectionate remembrance of Robert Kay, for 19 years
Superintendent of Bank Top Sunday School,
1888-1907.
He was a good man.

Other memorial portraits are also hung in the school, and these are inscribed :

Henry Ashworth, J.P., of the Oaks House.

Born, Sept. 4th, 1794.

Died, May 17th, 1880.

Rebuilt Bank Top School, 1855.

President of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce.

Member of the Anti-Corn Law League.

George Binns Ashworth, J.P., of Birtenshaw.

Born, Nov. 29th, 1823.

Died, June 9th, 1905.

Manager of Bank Top School, 1855-1905.

James Roscoe, M.A., Cambridge University.

Headmaster of Oatlands College, Harrogate.

Pupil Teacher Bank Top School, 1852-1855.

Thomas Bertenshaw.

Born, June 12th, 1837.

Died, May 17th, 1901.

Headmaster of Bank Top School, 1860-1901.

To add further to the usefulness of this establishment, Mr. G. H. Ashworth, M.A., built a new class-room and kitchen, which was opened on Saturday, May 23rd, 1908.

Later, he also carried out structural alterations to the premises, which, by means of sliding partitions, enable the class-rooms to be opened out so that there is now accommodation suitable for 600 persons. These additions and alterations were made entirely at Mr. Ashworth's expense, and did not cost the Sunday School anything. After these alterations were completed, the Church and School was opened at the Harvest Festival Service, which was held on September 24th, 1911. A Service of Song was held in the afternoon, which was presided over by Mr. G. H. Ashworth, M.A. The preacher at the evening service was Mr. W. Williams, of Irwell Bank.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

FORMATION OF BANK TOP CHURCH.

Congregational Council Approached—Rev. Geo. Barber's Sermon on the Formation of a Church—Inaugural Service—Communion Service with 52 Membership Roll—Administration—First Baptism—Communion Plates Provided by Mr. G. H. Ashworth—Presentations to Organist and Secretary—List of Officers—Sunday School Superintendents—Secretaries—Treasurer—Organists—Choirmasters—Mr. Ashworth's Gift—Bank Top Estate Deed—Licence to Build—Street Names.

Up to the end of 1909, only a Sunday School, along with the evening service, was kept up, but seeing that the neighbourhood had begun to grow, a further development was decided upon. After very serious consideration, and under the leadership of the superintendent, Mr. Robert Abbott, a decision was made to approach the Congregational Council to form a Church at Bank Top. A meeting was arranged through the secretary, the Rev. F. W. Lloyd Jones, and a deputation from the School, consisting of Mr. G. H. Ashworth, M.A., Mr. Robert Abbott, Mr. J. H. Ashworth, Mr. J. Lowe, Mr. W. Aspden, Mr. E. Hall, and Mr. Henry Kay, the Secretary, met the Advisory Committee of the Council at Blackburn Road Congregational School on Tuesday evening, December 21st, 1909, under the chairmanship of Mr. Colin Cooper, President of the Council. The deputation was very kindly received, and the Council promised to help them in every way they could. As a first step the Rev. George Barber was asked, and he promised very willingly to go to Bank Top and give a sermon on "Congregational Principles and the Formation of a Church." This sermon was preached on Sunday evening, January 30th, 1910, before a very good congregation, and was a very impressive service. His text was taken from Matthew xviii., 20 : "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them," which he said constituted the real meaning of a Church.

The Inaugural Service in connection with the formation of Bank Top Church was held on Monday, March 21st, 1910, at 7-30 in the evening, the Dedication Service being a splendid one, and really exceeded all expectations. The

Church was comfortably filled, and about 110 persons took part in the Communion Service. The meeting was presided over by Mr. Colin Cooper, President of the Council, and the following Ministers also took part in the service:—The Rev. George Barber, who gave the address; the Rev. A. Le Marchant, B.A., gave an exposition of Congregational Principles; the Rev. W. J. Collier, M.A., gave the Prayer for a blessing on the New Church; and the welcome into the fellowship of the Bolton Churches was given by Mr. Colin Cooper.

At the Communion Service held after the Dedication of the Church, the Rev. Cecil Nicholson and Rev. W. Robinson, offered the prayers. At the same service Mr. George E. Cooper, of Mawdsley Street Church, and Mr. Joseph Boyle, of the Rose Hill Church, acted as the Deacons, the Church being started with a membership roll of 52 members, and by the accession of Bank Top Church, congregationalism in Bolton was strengthened, and its members, in fellowship one with another, and with their Saviour in the Communion of the Lord's Supper, have strengthened each other. Mr. George Ashworth and Mr. Arthur Ashworth, to whom the school buildings belong, have been most considerate of the wants of the new Church, and very generous supporters thereto, both financially and socially.

The administration is under the rule of four Deacons and two Deaconesses, whose names are Mrs. Cheetham, Mrs. Ashworth, Mr. John Henry Ashworth, Mr. William Aspden, Mr. Robert Abbott, and Mr. Henry Kay. The first regular Communion Service was held in the Church on April 10th, 1910, when 60 members and friends partook of the Lord's Supper. The preacher on this occasion was the Rev. James Johnstone. The first Baptismal Service was held on April 24th, 1910, when Edith Whitaker, daughter of Percy and Fanny Whitaker, was baptised by the Senior Deacon, Mr. J. H. Ashworth. In connection with this baptism a memorial cup was presented on behalf of the Church by Mr. J. H. Ashworth, the Senior Deacon, to Edith Whitaker, on September 22nd, 1910.

When the worshippers had formed themselves into a Church, Mr. Ashworth very kindly paid all expenses, such as fee for marriage licence, registers, and communion plate. He also

provided the Church with a safe to keep them. He has recently re-modelled and re-constructed the interior of the building, and provided new seating accommodation. Such generosity should be an inspiration to all the members of the Church and Congregation to spend and be spent for Him who is the source of all good and gracious gifts.

As a voluntary contribution to the Communion Service, Mr. George H. Ashworth, M.A., very kindly provided the communion plates and stand for the glasses. This act was recognised at the Church Meeting held on April 26th, 1910, when the following resolution was passed :—

“ That the best thanks of the Church be tendered to Mr. Ashworth for his help and generosity in providing the utensils for use at the services.”

On March 20th, 1910, a presentation was made to the Organist, Mr. Joseph Lowe, on his completing 25 years' service, and on January 14th, 1911, another presentation was made to the School Secretary, Mr. Henry Kay, on his completing 25 years' service also. Mr. Kay has now resigned this office and accepted that of Church Secretary.

The following is the list of officers of the School since the start. The Sunday School Superintendents are as follows :— Mr. Edward Howarth, Mr. Timothy Entwistle, Mr. John Haslam, Mr. Richard Warburton, Mr. John Pilkington, Mr. Thomas Higham, Mr. Isaac Entwistle, Mr. Henry Higham, Mr. Henry Darbyshire, Mr. William Mellor, 1873-1888 ; Mr. Robert Kay, 1888-1907 ; Mr. Robert Abbott, 1907, and still serving.

The following have filled the office of School Secretary :— Mr. Edward Howarth, Jun. ; Mr. Robert Hall, 1865 ; Mr. William Entwistle, 1873 ; Mr. James Lea, 1874-1877 ; Mr. W. P. Entwistle, 1877-1885 ; Mr. Henry Kay, 1885-1910 ; and Mr. Charles Whitaker, who is still serving. The office of School Treasurer has been filled by the following persons :— Mr. Robert Smith, 1870-1874 ; Mr. James Cheetham, 1874-1908 ; and Mr. Edwin Hall, who still retains this office.

The list of Organists is as follows :— Mr. Jesse Entwistle, Mr. J. Greenhalgh, Mr. John Entwistle, Mr. J. Kershaw, Mr. James Vickers, Mr. William Bolton, Mr. James Lea, and Mr. Joseph Lowe, who officiates still.

The Choirmasters' names are Mr. John Taylor, Mr. John Highton, Mr. Thomas Higham, Mr. James Pilkington, Mr. James Cheetham, and Mr. William Aspden, the present leader.

At a Church and School Anniversary of Bank Top Church, Mr. G. A. Ashworth, of Birtenshaw, the owner of the building and the village of Bank Top, announced to the congregation that he was contemplating a gift of £500 by way of an endowment, to be invested in the name of several trustees, the proceeds to be used for the various expenses incurred by the Church and Sunday School. Four Deacons of the Church, along with the Church Secretary, have been appointed Trustees for life. The members of the Church and School, and all the other Churches in the district, greatly appreciate this and many other generous gifts given by Mr. Ashworth.

The Deed of Gift executed is as follows:—

“This indenture made the twentieth day of August, 1912, between George Harry Ashworth, of Birtenshaw, near Bolton, and Robert Abbott, Bank Top, Overlooker; John Henry Ashworth, Salesman; William Aspden, Overlooker; Edwin Hall, Mill Manager; and Henry Kay, Drawer-in.

“Whereas the said George Harry Ashworth being desirous of providing a fund, the income of which shall be applied in defraying certain of the expenses in connection with Bank Top Congregational Church and Sunday School, has transferred into the names of the parties hereto of the second part the investment specified in the first schedule hereto which has been purchased at the price of five hundred pounds.”

Rules and regulations for the administration of the trust are specified in the deed, the income of the stock to be used to provide gas, coal, expenses of sick visitors not exceeding five pounds in one year, caretaker, printing and stationery, sermon expenses, children's prizes, teachers' books, Bibles, and hymn books and renewals thereof, sacramental wine, choirmaster and organist's fees.

The estate of Bank Top was taken over from Eleanor, the Countess of Grosvenor, by John and Edmund Ashworth, on June 24th, 1824. The document conveying this is an interesting one, and in the Licence to Build, the agent caused the following clauses to be inserted, with an eye to the safeguarding of the rents for the Countess.

“ June 24th, 1824.

“ John and Edmund Ashworth shall within the space of two years next ensuing the date hereof at his and their own costs and charges erect build and finish or cause and procure to be

erected built and finished and at all times thereafter during the said term hereby granted maintain and keep or cause to be maintained and kept in repair upon the said plots of land hereby demised or upon some part thereof respectively one or more good firm and substantial house or houses outhouses cotton mill or cotton mills or other manufactories and buildings of brick or stone or both to be set in lime mortar and covered with slates which when finished shall be of the clear yearly value of at least double the yearly rent hereby reserved and in the case of fire tempest destruction or decay of or to such buildings or any of them shall and will from time to time rebuild and replace the same with other suchlike good buildings at all times during the said term."

In passing through the village of Bank Top one is struck with the peculiar names of the streets, and the wonder caused thereby is not satisfied until we realise that Eleanor Street is named after Eleanor, Countess of Grosvenor ; Hugh Lupus Street after the first Earl of Chester, and founder of the Grosvenor family ; Fitz Hugh Street, another of the family names ; and Oulton Street, after the Oulton Estate, one of the Grosvenor family estates.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

DUKE'S ALLEY NEW CHAPEL.

Formation of New Church Interest Here—Resolutions Relating Thereto—Communion Plate Left—Books Demanded—Arbitration—Arbitrators' Award—Rev. W. Robertson—Chapel Closed.

Many people cannot understand why it is that St. George's Road Church is able to claim to be the oldest Nonconformist Congregation in town through its connection with Duke's Alley Chapel, especially when they know that worship here was continued for nearly 40 years after St. George's Road Church was built. A perusal of the following facts will enlighten and make clear this point in its history.

A rather important resolution for the Church at Duke's Alley was passed at the Church Meeting in March, 1862. This enabled work to be carried on there when the new Church was formed at St. George's Road, by those who were more attached to the building than to the pastor, and the majority of their fellow members.

The resolution reads as follows :—

“That the Church, notwithstanding the resolution of February 26th, 1861, will give every facility which may be necessary to enable those of its members who desire to remain at this Chapel, to form themselves into a New Church.”

This resolution was prepared to meet the circumstances that existed then, and enabled a new Church to be established there, in order to meet the wishes of a party in the Church who were resolved to secede from those leaving the old premises for the new.

Being constituted into a separate Church, the minority, without the consent of the Church or its officers, and without either notice or consultation, had procured the selection of new Trustees, and committed themselves to other acts inconsistent with the resolutions to which they had pledged themselves. They felt that they would not move to the new place, so they meant to remain at the old and try to get matters relating to it into their own hands. By the resolution passed then they were enabled to do this by virtually establishing a new Church at Duke's Alley. The matter was further smoothed over by a further series of resolutions passed in March, 1863, as follows :—

“I.—That this Church will, according to the resolution passed at a meeting of this Church and the Congregation held February 26th, 1861, remove to the new building prepared and erected for its own use on St. George's Road, on the 3rd day of April, 1863, being the hundred and eleventh anniversary of its formation.

“II.—That the Communion Service at present in use—the property of this Church—be left here for the use of the New Church to be formed in this Chapel after our removal.”

These resolutions were agreed to and the Pastor then entered into a brief historical explanation of the steps which had been taken in reference to the building of the new Church, and showed the gross misrepresentation of matters of fact which had been made by the seceding party. This was the final meeting of the old Church in its old quarters, and the services there were brought to an end with solemn prayer. By these Acts the Church of Duke's Alley, as represented by the members worshipping there, was removed and established in its new quarters and under the new name of “St. George's Road Congregational Church.”

The friends who remained at Duke's Alley, having been granted a few things, thought they were entitled to the whole.

They therefore employed a Manchester solicitor to demand the books and various other things from the Deacons and Minister who had removed to St. George's Road Church. They even invoked the aid of the Trustees whom they had appointed. The matter was at first ignored on the ground that the Trustees had no authority to act for the Church. Finally, after considerable trouble had been experienced one way and another, an Arbitration was agreed upon by both parties. The case for the old Church as represented by the bulk of the worshippers who had removed to St. George's Road and adopted that name for their own convenience for their future work, was presented by the Rev. W. Hope Davison, the point being the continuity of a church as a society in its occupation of a series of buildings. Mr. Davison was exceedingly careful to make this point clear in every stage of the movement for the erection of a new building. Those, therefore, who remained behind, were really seceded from the religious society to which they had belonged. The arbitrators for St. George's Road Church were the Revs. J. G. Rogers, B.A., and R. M. Davies, and for Duke's Alley Church, Messrs. A. Barnes, B.A., and the Rev. Enoch Mellor, M.A., the case being presented for them by Mr. Adam Ferguson. The Rev. J. Gwyther was appointed Umpire. All matters were very carefully sifted, and the result was declared in the following terms:—

“That in the opinion of the Arbitrators the Church at St. George's Road has established its claim to be the original Duke's Alley Church, and is consequently entitled to the possession of the Church Books and Records; but they direct that authenticated copies of the same be supplied to the Church now worshipping at Duke's Alley on condition of their paying the costs.”

This award is signed by Enoch Mellor, M.A., J. Guiness Rogers, B.A., Alfred Barnes, R. M. Davies, and James Gwyther, Umpire, and is dated “Bolton, April 4th, 1864.”

The cause at Duke's Alley has since that time been carried on as a separate church, doing a great though unostentatious work for the Master. The friends who remained at Duke's Alley invited the Rev. W. Robertson, of Banbury, and he entered upon his ministry in 1863, bravely pursuing his work in the old place.

During 1865, a little difference of opinion arose between the Rev. William Robertson and the Deacons, the Church

management being under their charge. The unrest caused thereby extended and culminated finally in 1867. Copies of some of the correspondence appear in the minute book of this period, and the differences between Mr. Robertson and the Deacons, and other members of the congregation, continued to increase until the end of March, 1867, when all the Deacons, all the Trustees with one exception, and about one-half of the Church and Congregation left the Chapel, and joined their fellows at St. George's Road Church. This action was a remarkable justification of the policy of 1861-3. The people who remained with Mr. Robertson soon reorganised themselves and prepared to work earnestly to repair the breach, and for a short time appeared likely to succeed. However, the same spirit that had caused the mischief in 1866, soon became manifest again, and culminated in September, 1867, in another division, when all the new Deacons and about one-half of the remaining congregation also left the Chapel, and joined their former comrades.

After this second division only a few personal friends remained to support Mr. Robertson. From this time the interest in the place became gradually weaker, and even Mr. Robertson's most devoted supporters began to see that it was desirable that he should resign the pastorate—and to accomplish this they raised a subscription for him. He preached a farewell sermon on the 4th of July, 1869, and on the 8th of July, they held a Tea Meeting in the School and presented to him an illuminated address and a purse containing about forty pounds. After Mr. Robertson left the Chapel was closed.

CHAPTER XL. STARTING AFRESH.

Buildings Repaired—Meetings Called—Church Re-opened—Rev. J. C. Nesbitt Called—Rev. H. W. Stranger—Rev. Taliesin Davies—Proposal to Close Upset.

Efforts were, however, made to raise up the cause; and the building was put in thorough repair under the following circumstances:—On the 9th of July, 1869, a meeting of the Chapel Trustees was held, and Thomas Gooden and G. W.

Orrell were appointed to examine the trust property and get estimates for the necessary repairs, and at an adjourned meeting the same persons were appointed to superintend the work ordered to be done.

When Mr. Robertson had left the Chapel, the few people that remained were completely disorganised. The Chapel and School were closed on the 10th of July, and during the following week a few friends consulted together and caused a notice, as given below, to be advertised in the Bolton papers, and about 100 copies were printed on notepaper and circulated amongst the people who had formerly been connected with the place.

“DUKE’S ALLEY SUNDAY SCHOOL.

“There will be a meeting in the Upper School this (Saturday) evening, July 17th, at six o’clock, to make arrangements for undertaking the school. All the friends who feel interested in its future welfare are respectfully invited. Tea will be provided at seven. The Chapel is at present closed for repairs, and during the alterations Public Worship will be conducted in the School.”

At this meeting fourteen persons assembled and made the necessary arrangements for conducting the Sabbath School and for Public Worship, which was held in the School nine weeks, until the Chapel was reopened for public worship.

A copy of the circular below was sent to the persons who had been seatholders previous to the first division in 1867.

“DUKE’S ALLEY CHAPEL.

“The above place of worship having been repaired and cleaned will be opened for public worship on Sunday, September 19th, 1869. The services will be conducted by the Rev. Professor Griffiths, of Bowdon. Morning at half-past ten. Evening at half-past six. Collections will be made after each service.

“Attendance will be given at the Vestry on Saturday afternoons, from four to eight, during September, for the purpose of letting Pews.

“Dear Sir,

“The above advertisement will appear in the papers on Saturday, and the Committee are anxious that the wishes of the old worshippers and friends of the place should be consulted before they let the pews. They will therefore be obliged by an intimation in the meantime if they may reserve for you the seat you have previously occupied. Attendance will be given on Friday next, at the Vestry, from three to five p.m.; or if you reply by letter, please address Thomas Gooden, 13, Old Acres, Bolton.

“Dated, September 1st, 1896.”

The Church was re-organised on the 29th of September, 1869. Messrs. Joseph Bradshaw, G. W. Orrell, and

James Nicholson were elected Deacons, and the ordinance of the Lord's Supper was observed on the 10th of October, the service being conducted by the Rev. William Roseman, of Bury.

This was followed up by a seatholders' meeting on December 1st, 1869, with Mr. G. W. Orrell in the chair. Mr. Thomas Gooden read over a lengthened statement of the proceedings since the first meeting in July, and stated that there were about forty seatholders then, the persons who had hitherto assumed responsibility were desirous that a committee should be elected to take charge of the management. The following persons were elected to act with the Deacons as the Finance Committee for 1870 :—Mr. John Albert Slater, Mr. S. Bates, Mr. M. Buck, and Mr. S. Hayes. The following resolution was moved by Mr. James Nicholson and seconded by Mr. Hayes and carried unanimously :—

“That the best thanks of this meeting be given to Mr. Joseph Bradshaw and Mr. Thomas Gooden for the great zeal and devotion with which they had laboured to revive the Church of God in Duke's Alley.”

After working for about a year, the friends thought themselves strong enough to support a minister, and invited the Rev. J. C. Nesbitt, of the Lancashire Independent College, to become their pastor.

He stayed about five years, and during this time a good working men's class was in existence, but it was hampered somewhat for lack of a suitable meeting place. He laboured until September, 1875, when he resigned his pastorate.

Mr. Nesbitt was succeeded by the Rev. H. W. Stranger.

A Tea Meeting was held on March 29th, 1876, to welcome the Rev. H. W. Stranger to his pastoral labours, the ministers of the town being also invited to join. This meeting was a very great success, and a hearty welcome was given to the new Pastor.

In 1877, Mr. Stranger decided to resign his charge in March, 1878, and at a special meeting convened on December 9th, 1877, the matter was discussed and the resignation finally accepted.

The Church remained without a settled Pastor until 1879, when the Rev. Taliesin Davies, of High Wycombe, was asked to supply the pulpit for two Sundays, the 22nd and 29th of June, as a candidate for the pastorate.

On the 27th July, a special meeting of the Church and Congregation was held, at which it was decided to ask Mr. Davies to take the pastorate, if the decision of a Church meeting to be held later was the same. When this meeting was held a unanimous invitation was sent to Mr. Davies to take up the pastorate, which he accepted. He entered upon his duties at the end of September, 1879.

Financial matters from this time and right on to the end of the Church became a matter of great moment. Meetings were held to discuss ways and means, and the ministers were continually appealing to the Trustees for one thing or another, until affairs became somewhat disquieting. Matters became so upset that in June, 1882, it was proposed to close the Church altogether. Mr. Davies tendered his resignation, and a farewell service was arranged for on the evening of June 25th, 1882.

Mr. Taliesin Davies's farewell party took place on November 16th, 1882, and he was succeeded by the Rev. B. J. Harker. After the removal of the friends of Mr. Davison to St. George's Road, the residuary portion, small and fleeting, laboured under great difficulties and disadvantages. It cannot be said to be the fault of the ministers that there had been comparative failure, for they laboured very earnestly and perseveringly, both indoor and outdoor efforts being made, especially in the direction of temperance effort, but the fact remains that the rearing of a vigorous and self-sustaining Church at Duke's Alley with St. George's Road Congregational Church almost within a stone's-throw, was well-nigh an impossibility. Before the Rev. T. Davies retired, it was arranged to disband the Church, and the Rev. C. A. Berry and the Rev. Robert Best, attended the Valedictory Service there upon that express condition. This was also the wish and design of the surviving Trustees, but through some unfortunate misunderstanding the arrangement was not carried out. The matter is summed up by words uttered by the Rev. Robert Best at this time :—

“ We all honour and esteem the old mother Church—and desire for her a long and successful life, but I am more than ever persuaded that that can only be secured by transplanting herself to some growing neighbourhood, where she can renew her youth and prosper under conditions which cannot be secured any longer at the old place.”

CHAPTER XLI.

CLOSING SCENES.

Rev. B. J. Harker's Charges—Literary Work—Sale of Premises Considered—Mr. Lever Proposes Gymnasium—Mr. Harker's Memorial to Commissioners—Forward Movement—Ben Tillett—Premises Sold by Auction—Welsh Tabernacle—Trust Funds.

The Rev. Bailey John Harker was the last minister at the Duke's Alley New Church to uphold Congregational principles there. Born in July, 1843, at Grassington, Upper Wharfedale, a place at one time known to comparatively few, he by his writings has since made it known popularly, and his books, "Rambles in Upper Wharfedale," and his guide book to Grassington, which is published under the title of "The Buxton of Yorkshire," together with his novel, "Philip Neville of Garriton," have done wonders for this region. His parents were godly people, and were members of the Wesleyan body, and therefore it is no surprise to find him early rooted with a desire to preach, his first sermon being delivered when he was sixteen years of age. At nineteen he resolved to devote himself entirely to preaching the Gospel. He joined the Congregational body in 1868, and was ordained as pastor of Llandisilio Congregational Church, near Oswestry, in the following year. After a happy settlement of nearly four years there (1868-1871) he was compelled by ill-health to remove, and he then went to Guiseley, near Leeds, remaining from 1871-1874. Following this he took charge of a Church at Eccleshall, near Stafford, where he laboured with great acceptance from 1877 to 1879. Before he removed from there to Banff, N.B., Scotland, where he laboured from 1879 to 1881, a public presentation of a sum of £50 was made to him in recognition of what he had accomplished. His predecessor at Banff was the Rev. John Murker, M.A., known as the Apostle of the North, who had ministered for fifty years in the Churches of Banff and Macduff.

Mr. Harker commenced the oversight of the Duke's Alley New Church in November, 1882, and his ministry on



DUKE'S ALLEY CHAPEL.

the whole was much blessed. In addition to discharging his duties as minister, Mr. Harker held the Hulton Lectureship in Bolton, and retained the office of minister until Duke's Alley was finally closed in October, 1902. A volume of sermons, entitled "Christ and the Intellect," enables those who have not heard the sound of his voice to appreciate Mr. Harker's pulpit powers. In 1904 Mr. Harker undertook the charge of Adlington Congregational Church, where he remained until June 7th, 1907. Ill-health caused his retirement to the Old Vicarage, Horwich, where he still resides.

During the whole time of Mr. Harker's ministry, it cannot be said that matters were in a satisfactory condition. The services were but poorly attended, and there were difficulties in raising money to carry on the work here. For some time the feeling had been growing and finally took form in a desire to close the Church entirely, or start a new interest elsewhere. This matter was considered at an informal meeting of the Trustees of the Chapel and Schools on February 6th, 1891. At this meeting, the chairman, Mr. Adam Ferguson, stated that overtures had been made by Queen Street Mission to purchase the premises to give them increased accommodation. It was pointed out that it was perfectly well known that for some years the cause there had been a decaying one, and not likely to improve, so that it was thought to be a good opportunity if it were possible, to dispose of the whole premises and transfer them to the Mission. A sub-committee was appointed to enquire into the position and prospects of the congregation worshipping there at that time, and it was agreed by them on March 2nd to ask Mr. Harker on what grounds he could give the Trustees reasonable hopes that he would be able to raise sufficient funds to erect new buildings and carry on a new interest satisfactorily, in the event of the Chapel and School being sold for, say, £2,000.

The sub-committee met Mr. Harker on March 6th, 1891, and in answer to questions put to him, Mr. Harker said the Church consisted of 60 members, the morning congregation was very small, about 30, and the evening one about 100. He had done a great amount of Mission Work in the neighbourhood, but had been unable to retain any number of the people worked amongst. He had to have collections at each service,

and gave this as the reason for the class referred to not attending. He thought that nearly the whole of his people would follow him to any site which might be fixed upon. They were quite prepared to undertake the collecting of funds for the completion of Chapel and Schools even if they cost £5,000, and if they were unable to meet current expenses, he should propose to throw themselves upon the Church Aid Society. Power to sell the premises was sought, but the scheme did not go through. Matters dragged along until February 9th, 1903, when a joint meeting of the Chapel and School Trustees was held at the request of Mr. W. H. Lever, who had proposed a scheme for the consideration of the joint trustees with respect to the future of the property. Mr. Lever then stated that it had occurred to him that the property might be made available for the purposes of a gymnasium—the Chapel for males and the School for females, if the consent of the Charity Commissioners could be obtained to the scheme, as well as to the appropriating of a fund in the hands of Mr. Fred Cooper, which had been subscribed for a new School many years ago.

The matter was placed before the Charity Commissioners, but the difficulties of carrying out the scheme were such that the Commissioners' conditions could not be accepted, and therefore the scheme was abandoned.

In a Memorial drawn up by Mr. Harker some years before the Chapel was finally closed, there are to be found the reasons which really caused this closing to come about. I copy this as follows :—

" The Rev. Bailey John Harker drew up a memorial to the Charity Commissioners on November 6th, 1889, in which it was recommended that a scheme be established to the following effect :—

" That the whole of the properties belonging to the Trustees of the said Duke's Alley Chapel and Duke's Alley Sunday School be sold by public auction or private contract in such lots as may be advised. That the moneys produced by such sale or sales and also the moneys invested with the Bolton Corporation as the Duke's Alley Sunday School Building Fund, be amalgamated and form one fund and applied in purchasing or taking land and on their erecting a new Chapel and Sunday School in the district known as the Victory in the township of Halliwell the new and populous district in the outskirts of the town of Bolton. The said land to be acquired by and the said new Chapel and Sunday School to be vested in the present Trustees of the said Duke's Alley Chapel and Sunday School and upon similar Trusts to those contained in the said original Trust Deeds.

" Duke's Alley Chapel is situate in a back street or court in the heart of the town of Bolton. It is hemmed in by low-class cottages works and warehouses and shops. It is a very old building and is in a considerable state of dilapidation. The Sunday School is adjacent to the Chapel and is in very much the same condition. Neither the Chapel or School are adapted to modern requirements.

" Since the year 1862 there have been several ministers at Duke's Alley Chapel who have endeavoured to keep up the congregation and make great efforts to carry on religious work but without success, and at the present time the congregation is very small indeed. They are poor and have been unable to either keep the building in good condition, or even pay the minister his salary.

" The Trustees of the Chapel and School together with members of the Congregation have conferred together and they are unanimously of opinion that it is hopeless to carry on their work successfully in the present buildings, or to attract a congregation sufficiently large and influential to meet the expenses of renovating and keeping in repair the buildings as well as the other incidental expenses.

" There is a unanimous feeling that a successful interest might be built up in the Victory District. It is confidently believed that the erection of a new Chapel and School would be of great benefit to that locality. It is proposed that the present minister and Congregation of Duke's Alley Chapel shall remove to the new Chapel when ready.

This fell through entirely, and a forward movement was commenced with the intention of working the Church entirely on missionary lines, and with that end in view, Mr. Arthur A. Stephens, of Ilkeston, Derbyshire, was engaged to assist the pastor in the increased duties. Indoor and outdoor meetings were held, and the slums of Bolton systematically visited, the new mission being inaugurated on Saturday, September 19th, 1891, by a public tea meeting, and a hearty welcome was given to the new missioner, who had received the appointment of evangelist in connection with the Church. The Rev. B. J. Harker, presided over the after meeting, and explained how the necessity for this work arose.

Although some good and really useful work was done at this time the results were not of that permanent and lasting character which enabled an expensive interest to be maintained, and although every effort was made to keep the interest alive, even to the extent of calling in Mr. Ben Tillett, who preached the Sunday School Sermons in May, 1891. He also lectured in the Temperance Hall on "Christianity and Social Progress," the Rev. Canon Atkinson, Vicar of Bolton, presiding on the occasion.

Although Mr. Tillett's visit created great excitement in the religious and social circles, and his eloquence, pathos, humour, and poetry were acceptable, the interest was but transitory. All were impressed with his powers as a Christian advocate as well as a popular agitator, and a promise was obtained from him to pay a second visit in the following September or October. Nothing of a tangible result came from it, and the financial results were not up to expectations. Eventually arrangements were made with Mr. Harker, and the Chapel was finally closed. On September 13th, 1906, with the approval of the Charity Commissioners, the properties were disposed of by auction, the Chapel and Cottages in Chapel Alley being sold to representatives of the Welsh Church, who have since converted the building for their own uses, and re-named it as the "Welsh Tabernacle." This is under the charge of the Rev. J. Stanley Roberts, who has been fathering the Welsh cause and religion locally for 18 years.

The Sunday School and two houses in Ridgway Gates were sold to Mr. J. E. Sheppard, the wholesale grocer, who now uses the School for warehouse purposes.

The money realised by the sale of the buildings is now under the control of the Charity Commissioners, and with accrued interest, is represented by consols of the value of £2,661 2s. 7d., which stand in the name of the Official Trustee of Charitable Funds.

The Charity Commissioners are very strict in the preservation of trust funds, and this explains why the investments are in the name of the Official Trustee. These funds are, however, still available for some purpose connected with the Congregational body, as by an Order made by the Commissioners in July, 1907, the funds are subject to the approval of the Commissioners, to be applied in or towards defraying the cost of purchasing a site in the Borough of Bolton, and erecting thereon a new Chapel and School to be settled upon the trusts contained in the form of Deed known as the "Congregational Church Trust Deed." Some day in the future, there will no doubt be seen in the town of Bolton, another place of worship, not, maybe, called "Duke's Alley Chapel," but founded with the same spirit and under the same inspiration which established the old Chapel more than a century-and-a-half ago.

The Indenture or Trust Deed commenced the 8th day of September, 1753, and was made between James Houghton and John Bennet, and after this a second Deed, conveying the land on which Duke's Alley was built, dated 21st May, 1759, was made between John Bennet of the one part, and James Horridge, Ralph Leigh, Thomas Entwistle, John Redford, Thomas Anderton, and James Nuttall of the other part, whereby a leasehold plot of ground situate on the north side of a certain street called Deansgate, in Bolton, and the chapel or oratory thereon called Duke's Alley Chapel, with the appurtenances, were assigned for the residue of a certain term of 999 years, therein created by an Indenture of lease dated the 8th of September, 1753, subject to the payment of the yearly rent of £1 7s., and the observance and performance of the leases, covenants contained in the said lease upon Trust to permit the said Chapel or oratory to be used and employed for the exercise of Divine Worship therein by such a congregation and assembly of Protestants only as should be dissenting from the Church of England, and adhere to the Westminster Confession of Faith.

In the year 1867, the then Trustees purchased for the sum of £110, three freehold messuages, Nos. 12, 12a, and 14, in Chapel Alley, and adjoining to the Chapel, with the object of enlarging and improving the said Chapel at such time as they might think fit. By Indenture dated 18th January, 1871, the said Trustees purchased for the sum of £100 a dwelling-house, No. 25, Ridgway Gates, with the stable adjoining and a receivable yearly ground rent of £1 17s. 6d. By Indenture of lease, dated 19th January, 1871, the said Trustees purchased for the sum of £240, two messuages, Nos. 21 and 23, in Ridgway Gates, for the term of 880 years, subject to the yearly ground rent of £3 5s. The said premises were leased to the said Trustees. The Title Deeds to the said premises were deposited with Mr. John Butler Parkinson, to secure the sum of £100 and interest at 5 per cent. per annum, being money lent and advanced by him as part of the purchase moneys for the same premises. By Indenture, date December 7th, 1872, a freehold cottage adjoining the said Chapel was purchased on behalf of the said Trustees for the sum of £40 by the Chapel-keeper, Mr. Thomas Fox, who took a conveyance in his own name. These comprised the Chapel Trust Deeds.

For the Duke's Alley Sunday School Trust an Indenture, dated 28th March, 1840, was enrolled in Chancery on the 11th May, 1840, and made between Abraham Haigh and William Martin of the one part, and Benjamin Hick and twelve others of the other part, whereby a plot of land situate in Great Bolton, containing 419 square yards with the six messuages then standing on part of the said land (which cottages were afterwards pulled down and a School erected thereon) were assigned to them for the residue of the term of 989 years granted therein by Indenture of lease dated the 2nd of August, 1775, subject to the payment of the yearly rent of £1 14s. : "to erect or cause and procure or permit to be erected any building or buildings to be used as a Sunday School for the purpose of education according to the religious principles of the body or sect of Christians known by the name of Independents." By Indenture, dated 20th October, 1875, two messuages, Nos. 17 and 19, in Ridgway Gates, adjoining the said School, were assigned to the Trustees for the residue of the term of 977 years. Both trusts were consolidated as one before the property was sold.

CHAPTER XLII.

CORNER-STONE LAYING AT TYLDESLEY.

Temperance and Education Hall Used—Church Formed—Land Taken—First Trustees—Bazaar to Raise Funds—Reminiscences of Mr. Davison—Rev. J. R. Webster—Foundation Diggers—Building Committee—Corner-Stone Laying Ceremonies.

For a long time the Independents, or Congregationalists, had a strong desire to get a footing in Tyldesley, and in 1866, the Rev. William Hope Davison took the Temperance and Education Hall in Stanley Street, as a preaching station, and commenced afternoon service there.

Here they got together a congregation, and a branch Church was formed, and the work carried on. Interest in the venture grew, and was assiduously fostered by Mr. Davison and his workers here from St. George's Road Congregational

Church, Bolton, until a desire was expressed that a new Church should be built. Prior to this the place was practically an Evangelistic Station, some little preparatory work having been undertaken in the way of cottage meetings and open-air gatherings in various parts of the neighbourhood. With characteristic energy, Mr. Davison set to work to obtain subscriptions for this new church venture, and finally succeeded in getting the Church built, under the supervision of Mr. James Atherton as architect of the building. The County Union gave a grant in aid of this project.

The Temperance and Education Hall, afterwards called The Mechanics' Institute, was opened on Saturday, September 30th, 1851, and on the Sunday following the Rev. T. G. Lee, of Manchester, preached two sermons in it at which collections were made to defray costs, followed by public meetings during the following week, at which distinguished speakers were invited to speak. This afterwards became one of the first Mechanics' Institutes in the country. Classes were held almost every evening, and students for miles round the district took advantage of them. Many men who found their way to the front rank, especially in the cotton industry, owe their position to the splendid instruction and facilities which were to be acquired at these classes, one amongst the many being the late Caleb Wright, who founded the well-known firm of Caleb Wright & Co., and who afterwards became the Member of Parliament for the Leigh Division.

The land taken over for the erection of the Church was freehold, and on April 30th, 1868, a "Trust Deed" for the Church was completed. This is between the Rev. W. Hope Davison; William F. Tillotson, Publisher, Bolton; George Green, Tyldesley, Coal Proprietor; John Miller, Tyldesley, Boat Builder; Thomas Lonsdale, Tyldesley, Boot and Shoe Manufacturer; Ebenezer Hobbs, Tyldesley, Grocer; Joseph Ormrod, Junr., Bolton, Flour Dealer; Henry Smith Sturges, Bolton, Draper; James Lever, Bolton, Tea Dealer; Ralph Almond, Bolton, Timber Merchant; Benjamin Cole, Bolton, Draper; John Waring, Bolton, Tailor; Richard Shaw, Bolton, Draper; John Watson, Bolton, Engraver; James Atherton, Bolton, Surveyor; The Rev. Richard M. Davies, of Oldham, Minister; James Holt, Bolton, Cotton Dealer; George Bell,

Bolton, Engineer; and these gentlemen acted as Trustees, and those of them who are alive to-day still continue to act in that capacity as appointed then.

The desire at first was to erect a Chapel in the centre of the town, and to meet this desire as well as they could, a site was first of all taken in Elliott Street, which was right in the main street of the town. The cost of this land, however, appeared too great at the time, and so they were induced to accept the plot of land that the Church now stands upon in High Street. This was offered at what seemed so cheap a rate then that they closed with the offer at once, and ignored future possibilities and other site influences.

The congregation then worshipping in the Temperance Hall, Tyldesley, determined to hold a Bazaar in September 1869, for the purpose of raising funds for the building of a New Congregational Church and School for their convenience, and contributions and parcels were invited to be addressed to Mr. Simms, Elliott Street. This Bazaar was held in the Temperance Hall, on September 20th, 23rd, 24th, and 27th, 1869, and was opened by George Green, Esq., on the Thursday, the 23rd inst. J. R. Webster received subscriptions as minister, and Mr. John Miller as the treasurer.

The building operations for the Chapel and School commenced the same week, the Chapel occupying the main portion of the building, which is in Italian gothic style, erected of brick with stone facings. The edifice and the requisite land was expected to cost about £2,300, and about £1,000 had been raised towards this object. At the opening of the Bazaar at eleven o'clock, the Rev. W. Hope Davison gave out the hymn, "Forth in Thy Name, O Lord, I go," and the choir, accompanied on the pianoforte by Miss Green, led the singing. Prayer was offered by the Rev. E. Daniels, and the Rev. W. H. Davison then remarked that he could not forbear expressing his deep joy and gratitude with which he had looked round the room. The room was now very different from that in which he first met the Tyldesley people, when he opened that hall for public worship. They had had their "day of small things," very much smaller indeed than that day. He thought he preached one Sunday to 14 men, women, and children, and one of his friends on the platform had

preached to a smaller congregation than that. Through God's blessing, and the earnest labours of those gathered there, they had now not only a flourishing congregation and school, but the prospect before another twelve months had gone over, of having a beautiful Chapel, for which they were exceedingly thankful. The effort in which they were engaged was exceedingly costly, and they could not hope to present the Church as their gift to God unless they received the help of their friends from a distance. Many had contributed the beautiful articles in that room, from various parts of the country, and from that neighbourhood especially, and he was delighted to see the effort made by Miss Green, and the working women and working men, which he was sure would be a great credit and honour to them. He would just say how deeply he was touched by the reference in Mr. Daniel's prayer to the death of their old and true friend, Mr. William Smith, who had taken a deep interest in the progress of Congregationalism in his own town, and had been indefatigable in his labours connected with it. That morning he had passed away at the advanced age of 80, and his interest and heart was in their work there.

The Rev. J. R. Webster, the Pastor, stated that three or four years ago a Christian Mission was commenced in that place, and through the Divine blessing resting upon the efforts of their friend, the Rev. Mr. Daniels, a good congregation had been raised, and a successful Sunday School established. The place soon became too small, and an effort had to be made to raise money for the erection of a suitable place of worship. The result was that upwards of £200 had been promised, land was secured, and the work was now begun. Whenever they had applied for help they had received nothing but a kind and a hearty response. They hoped that the Divine blessing would rest upon the congregation, which was larger than ever; the School, also, was in a very healthy condition. The members of the congregation had taken up that project with the greatest determination, and he had not the slightest hesitation in them doing their best. They were greatly indebted to the ladies of Bolton for the sympathy they had manifested in that work, and for the aid they had given. Mr. George Green then declared the Bazaar open, the sum eventually realised being £204.

So elated were the young men at the prospect of having a Church of their own, that a score of them might have been seen every evening digging out the foundation for the new edifice.

The Church will accommodate 550 persons, and the School beneath about 400 scholars. The pews in the Church were made without doors, a fact that was commented on at the time as "seeming to indicate to strangers that they might go and sit where they think proper."

The gentlemen who formed the Building Committee of the new Church, and who became prominent in establishing the cause in Tyldesley, were Mr. Hobbs, Mr. Miller, Mr. Boydell, Mr. Charles Ely, Mr. Thomas Lansdale, Mr. Edwin Willett, Mr. D. Croft, Mr. J. Frost, Mr. R. Peters, and Mr. James France.

The corner stone of the Church was laid on Saturday, November 13th, 1869, by Henry Lee, Esq., J.P. A procession of scholars was formed at the Temperance Hall, and the children carrying flags and banners, marched to the site of the new Church. They were headed by several ministers and other leading gentlemen of the denomination, from Bolton and Farnworth, and on reaching the site, the hymn, "This stone to Thee in faith we lay," was heartily sung, and the Rev. J. Webster engaged in prayer. Mr. George Green then presented a handsome silver trowel and a neat mallet of fancy wood to Mr. Lee, and in doing so expressed a hope that the building might soon be out of debt, and that it might be successful as the birthplace of many souls to God. The trowel bore the following inscription:—

"Presented to Henry Lee, Esq., J.P., on his laying the corner stone of the Congregational Church, Tyldesley; 13th November, 1869."

A bottle containing copies of several local newspapers and of the denominational newspaper, was placed beneath the stone, which was laid in a workmanlike manner by Mr. Lee, who afterwards mounted the stone and said: "In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, I pronounce this stone well and truly laid."

The Rev. Robert Best offered up a fervent prayer for the Divine blessing for the work inaugurated, and the Rev. W.

H. Davison announced that the teachers and children would lay their offerings on the stone, and stated a sum of £800 was still needed to meet the outlay on the building. The children's offerings reached £7 6s., and Mr. Lee intimated that he would make up the last £50 of the deficiency.

In the evening a public tea meeting was held in the Temperance Hall, and a couple of hundred persons sat down at the table, an interesting meeting being held afterwards.

CHAPTER XLIII.

TYLDESLEY CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

The First Minister—Career of the Rev. Edmund Daniels—Rev. J. R. Webster—Sunday School Started—New Church Opened—Day School—Penny Bank—Rev. Joseph Cockram—Efforts to Remove Debt—Rev. Owen Davies—Rev. John Fielden—Rev. Dr. W. Karfoot—List of Officers

In 1866-8, the Rev. Edmund Daniels worked with great zeal and energy to found the cause of Congregationalism in Tyldesley. He commenced a system of tract distribution, which became very popular throughout the town. Regardless of sect or creed he personally distributed the tracts regularly every Friday evening, from house to house, leaving one in each house and collecting the one previously left. Taking an old disused upper room in Well Street, Mr. Daniels held on one night in each week what were known as "Penny Reading" evenings; these also became very popular, and the room was crowded every meeting night, the charge for admittance being one penny. The Readings were always of an uplifting character as well as entertaining. These and other efforts brought the cause to the front, and Mr. Daniels was the means of drawing many young people to his infant church, his influence being exerted in the direction of building up.

Mr. Daniels was born near Canterbury, in 1837. After some experience as a Wesleyan lay preacher, he studied at Didsbury College, and travelled on Circuits in Herefordshire, Cornwall, and Norfolk. On the introduction of the Rev. J. Gwyther, he took charge of the Tyldesley Congregational Church from 1866 to 1868, when he resigned and became the minister at Hollingworth from 1868 to 1870.

When the Rev. Henry Banks resigned the pastorate at the Daubhill Congregational Church, Mr. Daniels was called for service at this place, on the suggestion of the Rev. W. H. Davison, and occupied the pulpit here during the years 1870 to 1874. His next call was Felling, where he remained from 1874 to 1877, and then took charge at Byker (Sunderland), in January, 1878, but died on April 26th of the same year.

The Rev. Joseph Robert Webster succeeded Mr. Daniels at Tyldesley, and was pastor there, 1869 to 1871, during which time the Church building was erected and opened.

Mr. Webster was born at Bolton, on January 11th, 1846, and spent some time as a schoolmaster, beginning to preach when quite young. The fine character, presence, and eloquent preaching of Mr. Webster soon drew a large number of adherents. He was quite a favourite, especially with the young men, whom he used to meet on one night in each week for religious instruction. The young and enthusiastic preacher spared no pains to develop the cause so well begun, and during his successful ministry the cause of Congregationalism flourished remarkably, the Hall being filled to overflowing every Sunday evening. Here a Sunday School was commenced, the first superintendents being Mr. Ebenezer Hobbs, Mr. Charles Ely, and Mr. James France. Mr. Ely commenced a Young Men's Class, which grew in numbers rapidly, the lessons became very attractive to the young men, and, as the subjects were announced for the coming Sunday, they were always looked forward to with eagerness. The capable handling of the subjects—always scriptural—and the eager debates which followed, were both intelligent and instructive. As a result of the hard and energetic work of the pastor, a number of prominent townsmen who by this time had associated themselves with the new cause, met together to consider the advisability of building a Church. A site was secured, and the services of an architect were requisitioned, and finally the contract was let to Mr. Summerfield, a local builder. The Church was to cost £2,300, including the land, and the present well-appointed Church and School in High Street is the result.

The new Congregational Church was opened for Divine worship on Wednesday, the 31st of August, 1870, by the



TEMPERANCE AND MEMORIAL HALL.

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INTERIOR—TYLDESLEY CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

Rev. Enoch Mellor, D.D., of Halifax. The introductory service was conducted by the Rev. W. H. Davison, who from the first was most assiduous in his labours in connection with this place. The Rev. Dr. Mellor preached from Luke xv., 10, in the morning, and in the evening from Jeremiah xi., 19; the collections amounted to £56 10s. 4d.

On Sunday, September 4th, the Rev. Professor Scott, of Lancashire Independent College, took the services. On Thursday, September 8th, in the evening at half-past seven, the Rev. J. A. Macfadyan, M.A., took the service.

On Sunday, September 11th, the Rev. William Park, of Southport, occupied the pulpit, and on Thursday, September 15th, the Rev. J. McDougall. Sunday, September 18th, the Rev. G. H. Brown, of Eccles; Monday, September 19th, Rev. Charles Garrett, of Manchester; Sunday, September 26th, Rev. Thomas Mills, in the afternoon, and the Rev. J. R. Webster in the evening; Thursday, September 29th, John Ashworth, of Rochdale, author of "Strange Tales," etc., came as a finish to these services. A public tea meeting was held on September 20th.

A Day School was commenced by Mr. Webster on February 6th, 1871, on unsectarian principles, under the name of Tyldesley Independent British School. This was afterwards changed to Tyldesley Congregational Day School. Mr. A. Clayton was the first schoolmaster, and Mr. Charles R. Croft and Mr. Jonathan Ely were the first pupil teachers, both subsequently entering the Congregational Training College at Homerton, London. Mr. Clayton, who only held his position for a few months, was succeeded by Mr. Thos. George Menhinick, who commenced on July 16th, 1871, and held the position of schoolmaster until December, 1873, when he left to take his degree at the Oxford University with a view to entering the ministry.

About 1871, Mr. Webster received a call from Ormskirk, which he accepted. The loss of Mr. Webster was a great blow to the Church, for he had affectionately endeared himself to his flock, and all sorely regretted his departure.

He removed to Ormskirk in 1871, to Merthyr Tydvil in 1874, thence to Pembroke Dock (Albion Church), 1877 or 1878, to Ebenezer Church, Chatham, 1885, where he was instrumental

in building a new church, owing to the former one being destroyed by fire. He died September 9th, 1910.

Mr. William Cooling was appointed schoolmaster over about 150 children, in January, 1874, and remained in charge until the Day School was closed in 1891, 500 scholars being then at the School. The Day School correspondent was Mr. Ebenezer Hobbs.

A penny bank for the school children was run, and about £50 a year was its turnover. There was also, and is still, a very successful Band of Hope of about 150 children, and a useful choir.

The Rev. Joseph Cockram followed in 1871. He was born at Reading in 1836, was pastor at Wickwar, Gloucestershire, 1861 to 1864, and assistant to the Rev. T. Green, of Ashton-under-Lyne from 1864 to 1868. His next call was to Tyldesley, and he commenced his work here about November, 1871, and retained his office until 1877, when he too resigned and accepted a call at Garstang, and then at Little Asby, Westmoreland, where he died on October 20th, 1900. Mr. Cockram was a good preacher, and a most delightful man, and his services at Tyldesley were much appreciated. Having a small printing press of his own, he did the printing for the Church himself, at his own cost.

During his term of service he had many intimate connections with the St. George's Road Church in various ways, and at the Annual Church Meeting of the seatholders and members of this place on April 30th, 1873, a resolution appears on the minutes as follows:—"That a special collection be made each year on behalf of the Tyldesley Congregational Church." This was of course to enable this Church to get free from debt, and is not necessary now, because the Church at Tyldesley is self-supporting, and has long ago freed itself from the incubus of a debt on its premises. This was done partly by subscriptions, and also by efforts made by the people themselves in order to get matters working on a satisfactory basis.

An entertainment, the first of a series, for the building fund, was given in the schoolroom, on Monday evening, November 29th, 1875, the Rev. J. Cockram presiding. In the course of his remarks he noted the hopeful signs of interest in the object which they had in view that evening. He urged

that with the growth of their township there should be an increase of zeal on the part of the several sections of the Church, and instead of regarding their work as Congregationalists with jealousy, he thought that they had a just claim to be recognised as an agency for good, both in their spiritual and educational work. There was such work to be done in Tyldesley that their whole energies would be taxed for the moral and spiritual good of their fellow-townspeople and their children, and he trusted that their claims to the name of Christians would be sustained by their efforts to this end. As an instance of sympathy with their work, he had pleasure in stating the receipt of ten guineas from Hugh Mason, Esq., towards their building fund.

The fifth Anniversary Services were held on Sunday, September 12th, 1875. Sermons were preached in the afternoon by the Rev. H. H. Scullard, of Daubhill, Bolton, and in the evening by the Rev. G. H. Brown, of Eccles. Collections were taken on behalf of the building fund.

On December 1st, 1875, the Deacons of St. George's Road met the following persons, who were appointed as a deputation from the Church at Tyldesley:—The Rev. J. Cockram, Mr. Ebenezer Hobbs, Dr. Trail, and Mr. C. Ely, to make arrangements for the Public Recognition of the Church at Tyldesley. The request of the Church at Tyldesley that our Church should partake in its Public Recognition was unanimously acceded to, and arrangements made in accordance therewith.

The next minister was Owen Davies, a student from Lancashire College, and who commenced his ministry at Tyldesley about November, 1877, retaining the pastorate up to about February, 1884. After this he was living at Wigan, "out of charge," till 1900, his name no longer appearing in the year books.

The Church was reported "Vacant" from 1884 to 1890, the Manchester Lay Preachers supplying the pulpit with various ministers.

The Rev. John Fielden was the next minister, being called to the pastorate on June 11th, 1891, and commencing his ministry about October of the same year.

This gentleman is first mentioned as pastor at Appleton Wiske, a Yorkshire village Church, long since extinct. His

period of service here ranged from 1871 to 1875, when he removed to Nuneaton (Broad End), where he was in charge from 1875 to 1882. Plymouth (Norley) then claimed his services from 1882 to 1888, and he came to Tyldesley in 1891, remaining until about July, 1895.

His next call was New Windsor, Manchester, a pastorate he occupied from 1896 to 1901, when he removed to Bacup in 1903, remaining there until 1908. Since then he has been living in Manchester, "out of charge."

The Rev. Dr. William Karfoot, B.A., was next in charge of the ministry at Tyldesley in the same year, 1895, and was a very successful preacher amongst the people here for ten years, retiring in June, 1905, to Leigh. He was really appointed by the County Union to take the oversight of the Church here, and now lives in retirement at Leigh. His work will long be remembered at Tyldesley, and his services were much appreciated. His scholarly expositions were a masterpiece unique in themselves, and attracted much notice at all times.

"WM. KARFOOT, B.A. (Vict.), M.A., LL.D., T.C.D., late Shorrock Fellow and Hebrew Prizeman of Lancashire College, Honourman and Associate of Owen's College, Member of Convocation of Victoria University, First on the List in Final Examinations for Degrees of Bachelor of Laws and Doctor of Laws.

"Assisted by Miss Karfoot, M.A. (Vict.), now undertakes private tuition."

Since then the pulpit has been supplied by the Congregational Lay Preachers' Association, right up to the present time.

The following is the list of officers at this Church to-day:—
Deacons—Messrs. R. Parr, John Heaton, J. Derbyshire, J. Prescott, and R. Edwards.

The Finance Committee consists of the Deacons above and Messrs. T. Lee Syms, J. Sharples, A. Heywood, H. Broadbent, John Berry, George Owens. The Church Secretary is Mr. R. Edwards, and the Treasurer is Mr. T. Lee Syms, F.R.P.S. The Sunday School Superintendent is Mr. J. Prescott; Secretary, Mr. C. Healey; Treasurer, Mrs. Syms.

There are seven Sunday School teachers, and a Young Women's Guild in active work, with Mrs. Hilton as the President, and Mrs. Syms the Secretary.

CHAPTER XLIV.

DERBY STREET CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

STARTING A NEW INTEREST.

Institute at Sunnyside Mills used as a Preaching Station—Rev. W. Hope Davison the First Minister—Sunday School started with Mr. J. B. Parkinson as the Superintendent—Interference—New Church Formed with Eighteen Members—First Deacons—Application for Grant in Aid—Rev. Henry Banks accepts the Pastorate—His Resignation—Mr. Daniels Called.

At the beginning of the year 1867 the pastor opened the New Institute which had been erected in connection with the Sunnyside Mills at Daubhill, as a preaching station. Mr. J. B. Parkinson took the morning service and the Rev. Wm. Hope Davison in the evening. The results of these first services seemed likely to be encouraging for future efforts of the same kind, and accordingly the Rev. W. Hope Davison of the Congregational Church, St. George's Road, Bolton, entered into an agreement with the committee of the Sunnyside Institute, Daubhill, that he should be allowed the use of the Institute on Sundays at an annual rental of ten pounds. This matter being settled, it enabled a start to be made in a proper fashion, and on Sunday, November 17th, 1867, he opened this building for Divine Worship, and this became a preaching station in connection with the Congregational Church, St. George's Road.

A Sunday School was afterwards opened, with Mr. J. B. Parkinson as the first superintendent. To this school the rules of schools connected with the Congregational Church were applied, and certain persons were elected by the teachers to represent such school in the General Committee of the Congregational Church for Sunday School operations.

At the first Church meeting held at the Sunnyside Institute on January 3rd, 1868, a resolution is recorded that the Rev. H. Banks be requested to remain over another Sabbath and supply the pulpit.

The first harmonium used in the services, was decided upon for the use of the Church and Congregation, on January 3rd, 1868.

Some difference of opinion arose through the strong interference of Mr. Joseph Bradshaw, and ultimately on the 14th day of April, 1868, Mr. Davison received a communication from certain persons connected with the station, to the effect, that in their opinion it would conduce to the efficiency of the work which had then begun, both in the Congregation and School, if, instead of remaining as already constituted—a branch of St. George's Road—the place was worked as a distinct and separate independent Church. At the meeting held on the evening of the same day in the Institute, with Mr. Davison in the chair, he explained the position of the place as indicated above, and, also what changes would be necessary if the wish which had been expressed was found to be generally entertained. He also entered into particulars of the relation of the Lancashire Congregational Union to such Churches, and it was ultimately resolved to form the brethren, who had banded themselves together, into a separate church, under its own management. This was eventually arranged and carried into effect, even though the members of the Church at St. George's Road at that time were strongly of opinion that the elements of a successful and peaceful future were altogether lacking.

Only tact and delicate handling saved the situation here at this time, together with the financial aid which was so freely given by certain of the prominent members at St. George's Road Church. A meeting was called as stated, and it was therefore unanimously resolved as follows :—

“ (1).—That in the opinion of this meeting it is desirable that a separate and Independent Church be formed in the Sunnyside Institute in lieu of the Branch Church of the Congregational Church, St. George's Road ; and the friends present hereby pledge themselves to raise not less than forty pounds per annum towards supporting Christian Ordinances and a Pastor.

“ (2).—That Mr. Davison be kindly requested to ask for a grant of £80 from the Lancashire Congregational Union for the ensuing year.

“ (3).—That Mr. Davison make all necessary arrangements for the constitution of a separate and Independent Church in this place on the evening of Thursday, April 30th, 1868.

"(4).—That Messrs. John Thornley, Henry Waller, James Woolley, and Robert Hunt, be appointed to act with the Rev. W. Hope Davison, as a committee to obtain supplies for the pulpit, until a suitable Pastor is obtained."

It was then moved by Mr. James Woolley and seconded by Mr. Henry Waller, and carried unanimously :—

"That the hearty thanks of the meeting be presented to the Rev. W. H. Davison for the gentlemanly and Christian course he has pursued towards us in the past, and for his kind promises of assistance and co-operation until we are settled with a Pastor."

Accordingly a special service was held in the Sunnyside Institute on Thursday, April 30th, 1868, at seven o'clock in the evening. The Rev. W. H. Davison occupied the chair.

The Rev. H. Banks having engaged in prayer, the Rev. W. Parks, formerly of Cannon Street, Manchester, and more recently of Park Street, Blackburn, and who had but a few days before returned from South America, explained the nature and constitution of an Independent or Congregational Church.

The Rev. W. H. Davison then read the following resolution passed at a meeting of the Mother Church in St. George's Road, Bolton, on the previous evening :—

"That Mr. and Mrs. James Woolley, Mr. Thomas Winward, Mary Kendall, Mr. Joseph Kendall, and Miss Sarah Wood, be and are hereby dismissed to form a new and Independent Church at the Preaching Station at Daubhill, and that the Pastor convey to the New Church, when it is formed, the cordial wishes of the mother Church for its Peace, Enlargement, and continued Prosperity."

He then asked of these persons whether it was their desire to be so united with each other in Christian Fellowship ; whether they received each other as Christian Brethren ; whether they accepted the doctrine and policy of Congregational Churches, and whether it was their purpose to act together for the Glory of Christ according to His Will as revealed in the New Testament.

The brethren assented and answered affirmatively by standing up ; and he then declared them to be duly constituted in the presence of the assembled ministers and brethren of other Churches, a Christian Church of the Congregational Order.

The following persons were then received into the fellowship of the Church by vote of the members. From the Church

at Duke's Alley Chapel, Bolton, Mr. John Thornley, Mr. David Henry, Mrs. Henry, and Mr. Bernard Preston. Mr. Henry Waller from Mawdsley Street Chapel, Bolton, and on profession of faith, on the report and recommendation of the Rev. H. Banks—Hannah Hollas, Sarah Dawson, William Moores, Alice Moores, Mary Kendall, John Brookes, and William Smith, thus constituting a new Church with 18 members.

The Church then proceeded to the election of Mr. John Thornley and Mr. James Woolley as Deacons and they held this office for many years.

The Ordinance of the Lord's Supper was then observed by the members of the newly-constituted Church, and by members of the Mother Church, and others who were present on this occasion. The address to the communicants was delivered by the Rev. Thomas Mills, of Leigh. The Rev. E. Daniels offered the first prayer commanding the Infant Church to the care of the Divine Redeemer. The Rev. R. Noble offered the second prayer. A brief address followed to the Church on her duties, and the service was closed with singing and the benediction which was given by the President, the Rev. William Hope Davison.

It was now separate from the Mother Church, though not quite independent, assistance being rendered of a monetary character, and otherwise, for quite a long period after this. In those early days, the labourers were few and the work arduous, and, from a variety of circumstances, discouraging. Nevertheless, though the newly-launched ship had to encounter many breakers, and contrary winds, she lived, and, by the Divine blessing upon the skill of successive helmsmen, got into good sailing condition, and prepared for stress of weather, which all those who venture upon the sea of Christian enterprise are sure to meet.

In order to secure the services of a pastor, application was made to the Lancashire Congregational Union for a grant of £80 per annum ; but the Church herself undertook to raise £40. Accordingly in the month of June, 1868, a pastor was obtained in the person of the Rev. Henry Banks, and on June 15th, 1868, he was called to the pulpit. The congregation assented to this call being given, and it was signed by John Thornley and James Woolley as Deacons. In reply, Mr. Banks

intimated his hearty acceptance of the call and entered upon his ministry in the same month. With the Lancashire Congregational Union at their back, and the Rev. Henry Banks as their leader and first recognised and paid pastor, the few Christians who had united themselves together as a Church of the Lord Jesus Christ set themselves with earnestness to plough the ground and sow broadcast the good seed of the Kingdom in the neighbourhood.

The Rev. Henry Banks served the Church faithfully for over two years, having week evening services in his own home, going among the people continually, and prepared addresses and sermons of a most interesting and soul-stirring character. The results, however, of this labour did not satisfy him, even though the work had proved successful from the very beginning, and to the great regret of his people, he accepted a call to St. Paul's Congregational Church, Hindley.

On January 10th, 1870, Mr. Banks gave notice of his resignation, and it was resolved :—

“ That it is the opinion of this meeting that the Church should retain its present position as an Independent Church aided by the Lancashire County Union and not be put on the list of Evangelistic stations.

“ That if the Union will kindly aid the Church as at present to the amount of £80, the members of the meeting pledge themselves to raise sufficient to support another minister.

“ That Mr. Woolley and Mr. Winward be appointed delegates to attend the meetings of the County Union.”

At the Church meeting held on February 20th, 1870, a resolution was unanimously passed as follows :—

“ That this Church maintain its Independency, but request to be linked up to St. George's Road in mutual affiliation or unity of action in case of difficulties.

“ That this Church having heard the Rev. E. Daniels preach for several Sabbaths, and believing him to be possessed of the requisite qualifications, we ask him to become our Pastor, and we hold ourselves bound, as far as in us lies, to minister to his temporal wants, and assist in the good work of saving souls.”

A call to this effect was forwarded to Mr. Daniels, and in reply thereto he intimated his acceptance, and entered upon his ministry on the first Sabbath in March, 1870.

CHAPTER XLV. FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS.

Bazaar Held—Resignation of Mr. Daniels—Rev. H. H. Scullard Called—Appearances at Start—Determination to Build New Sanctuary—Foundation Stone Laid—Memorial Stone Laid—Trustees Appointed—School-Chapel Opened—Resolution on Quitting the Institute—Efforts at Debt Clearing—Rejoicing at Success—Debts Paid.

It was, however, soon realised, that neither the solid and instructive ministry of Mr. Banks, nor the lively and occasionally powerful preaching of his successor, were exercised long enough to gather a sufficiently numerous and disciplined people to cope adequately with the difficulties which beset and retarded their strenuous endeavours, and the conviction grew that a place of worship in a more suitable situation than the Institute, was an absolute necessity, in order to accomplish the objects they had in view. To bring about this desirable result, a bazaar was held in the Institute, in April, 1873, and about £150 realised towards the building of a place of worship. Ground was therefore taken at a yearly ground rent, with an option of purchase, but all these projects were delayed and thrown into confusion through the resignation of the pastorate by Mr. Daniels on September 2nd, 1873. Although disheartened, the workers were not dismayed, but kept on their course undauntedly, and the Rev. H. H. Scullard was next called to the pastorate on November 9th, 1873, the call being signed by W. T. Erskine, John White, Thomas Winward, and Robert Hunt, as Deacons. This call was accepted by Mr. Scullard on November 29th, and he entered upon his duties on December 21st, 1873.

The aspect which presented itself all round was anything but encouraging to the outward eye; but to the eye of faith there was a prospect bright with hope, and with the promise on the part of the few people banded together that they would rally round him and sustain his efforts to the utmost of their ability, Mr. Scullard found himself severed from the Church at New Chapel, Horwich, which he had loved and served eight years, and located with a young, struggling community—then known as the Daubhill Congregational Church—

not knowing the things which would befall him, but resolved to testify the Gospel of the Grace of God.

Prior to Mr. Scullard's settlement the Church had secured the valuable plot of land on which the present Church and School stands, and in consequence of an agreement to build upon the land before two years expired, it was determined to lay the foundation stone, and this was accomplished in the year 1874, the members of the Church setting to work on the foundations with a will themselves, and then a halt was called until the sum of £1,700 should be promised. To realise this latter object, the people pledged themselves to contribute according to their ability, and great exertions were put forth to canvass outside friends. This being successful, the Memorial Stone was laid by Henry Lee, Esq., J.P., on Saturday, July 31st, 1875, and the Rev. John Houghton, D.D., of London, gave the address.

A public tea meeting in the Institute, was followed by a meeting afterwards, which was presided over by Harold Lee, Esq., and speeches were delivered by Revs. Thomas Willis, J. McDougal, H. Banks, R. Best, R. G. Lee, C. A. Berry, and Messrs. H. H. Lee, D. Crossley, and others.

The new minister with his people courageously faced the task of building a Church, and in less than three years they were able to leave the Institute in Adelaide Street for the more commodious premises in Derby Street. This building, combining Church and School, was erected at a cost of nearly £3,000. A good deal of this money was raised before building operations commenced, but for the next nine-and-a-half years the Church was concerned with the gradual extinction of a heavy debt. This burden by no means detracted from the success of the work on its spiritual side. The whole ministry of Mr. Scullard witnessed steady and solid growth, both in numbers and in devotion to spiritual ideals.

It was during his ministry that the School-Chapel was erected and paid for; and it is worthy of record that on the occasion of the laying of the memorial stone, that Mr. Scullard ventured to prophesy that in twenty years from that day the people would be engaged in laying the foundations of a new Chapel. This was so far fulfilled, that on Saturday, July 27th, 1895, the memorial stone of a new sanctuary was actually laid.

The members of the Chapel Building Committee were appointed as trustees of the new chapel and school which was about to be erected in Derby Street, and the said trustees were given power on February 16th, 1876, at a duly constituted meeting, to borrow upon the Trust such sum or sums of money as might be required to pay the expenses of erection.

The names of the Trustees appointed were the Rev. H. H. Scullard, Thomas Winward, Robert Hunt, James Edgeler, George Fairbrother, Thomas Marsden, John Warner, William Smith, Thomas Baker, Henry Welsh, William Longworth, Joseph Winward, and to these were afterwards added the names of William Bruckshaw, Benjamin Cole, John Smith, William Edward Cooper, Bernard Preston, Henry Smith Sturges, and Arthur Henry Lee.

From this period the building operations were pushed on with vigour, and on the 18th of May, 1876, the Chapel was opened for public worship. The Rev. Samuel Pearson, M.A., of Liverpool, preached the first sermon. Opening services were continued for two weeks, and various ministers preached both on the Sundays and week-days. A great tea meeting was also held, all the trays being provided gratuitously by friends. The congregation quitted the Sunnyside Institute on the opening of the School-Chapel, and when the members of the Church assembled in their new sanctuary on June 25th, 1876, one of the first things they felt compelled to do, was to place on record in the Church book :—

“ Their deep sense of obligation to Henry Lee, J.P., for the privilege accorded to them at a nominal charge, of using the Sunnyside Institute as their place of Worship and Sunday School from November, 1867, to May, 1876, where, through the mercy of God, many of their number received the Spiritual life, and all looked back with pleasure to such manifestations of the Saviour’s presence, that made real to them the house of God and the gate of Heaven. The members also felt that their thanks were due to the Committee of the Institute for the manner in which they had met their wishes on special as well as ordinary occasions.”

The resolutions relating to the above were moved by Joseph Winward and seconded by Bernard Preston, and were signed on behalf of the Church by H. H. Scullard, pastor.

It will readily be understood that at this time, a good deal of the Church’s energy was spent in meeting the claims arising from the erection of this sanctuary. Inclusive of

interest on loans and the price of the freehold, it cost nothing short of £4,500. The efforts to raise this large amount were prolonged over sixteen years, during which time much substantial help was obtained from different quarters.

The collections were not so large as the most sanguine anticipated, and many of the larger promises were not available immediately, but extended over to the time when the entire money was to be raised, the building itself being more costly by several hundred pounds than was at first expected ; still, for all that, the efforts were continued, and ultimately success was attained.

One of the great efforts was a grand bazaar in 1879, which was held in the Albert Hall. The Mayor, Alderman Peter Crook Marsden, presided, and Henry Lee, Esq., gave the opening address, while Mrs. Lee and family placed themselves in active co-operation by furnishing a stall, and encouraged the other ladies at their stalls by their presence throughout the bazaar. The results, however, fell much below what was hoped for, owing to the severe depression of trade at this time, and only £400 of the principal was paid off, leaving still a debt of £1,200 to battle with.

From 1879 to 1885, at intervals, many other earnest efforts were made to clear off this liability, until with grants of £450 from the Local Jubilee Fund, and generous contributions from other friends, the workers here were permitted to meet on October 31st, 1885, to rejoice over the entire extinction of this debt. The spiritual interests of the people were not neglected, and the roll of Church members, and the number of scholars steadily increased, a spirit of harmony and co-operation prevailing, which was productive of much good.

The debt on the Church having been fully paid off, the deeds were returned, and on January 31st, 1886, a resolution is recorded in the books :—

“ That they be deposited in the safe room of the Lancashire Independent College.”

“ Thanks were also tendered to every member of the Building Committee, for their long and valuable services, and upon the completion of their work.”

CHAPTER XLVI.

PASTORATE OF THE Rev. H. H. SCULLARD.

County Union Aid Abandoned—Union Letter of Congratulation—Land Purchased—Deane Mission Started—Presentations to Mr. George Clarkson and George Fairbrother—Resignation and Appreciation of Mr. Scullard.

Efforts were made during 1887 to get free from the County Union help, and a resolution respecting this is recorded on January 30th, 1887, when the amount of grant asked for was reduced as desired by the Church. No grant was asked for in 1888, the Church then feeling itself independent. The question of the land on which the Church stood came up for consideration on March 23rd, 1887, and the following resolution moved :—

“ That this Church being satisfied of the desirability of purchasing the land, agree to do so, but by what means be left to the land committee, and that when their plans are matured, they be brought before the Church for approval.”

The matter was further considered at a special Church meeting on November 30th, 1887, and the following motion of Mr. Alfred Davies, seconded by Mr. John Bromiley, was adopted :—

“ That this Church Meeting called in accordance with the requirements of the Trust Deed, authorises the Trustees to purchase the land on which the Church stands and adjoining land off Mr. Peter Ormrod, on terms specified in the Trust Deed.”

The land scheme was reported upon by Mr. Clarkson on March 25th, 1888, and was stated as having been satisfactorily completed. Also at the Church meeting on March 25th, 1888, a letter of congratulation from the Union to this Church was read as follows :—

“ Church Aid and Home Missionary Society,
“ Lancashire Congregational Union,
“ March 14th, 1888.

“ Dear Mr. Scullard,—At the recent Annual Meeting held at Blackpool, joy was expressed because of the progress of yourself and people enabling you to dispense with further monetary aid from the Union. It gives me much pleasure to communicate this resolution of congratulation, and I trust there will be continued prosperity in all that pertains to the welfare of the Church.

“ Yours sincerely,
“ THOMAS WILLIS,
“ Secretary.”

On the 5th of March, 1887, a social gathering in connection with the Sunday School Choir took place, and at the after meeting Mr. Kay Hargreaves presided. On behalf of the Sunday School Choir, Mr. Joseph Winward, superintendent of the school, presented Mr. George Clarkson with a handsome writing desk, with a suitable inscription on silver plate, in grateful recognition of his services as teacher and leader. Mr. Winward spoke of the high esteem in which Mr. Clarkson was held, not only by the Sunday School Choir, but also by the Church and Congregation, which he had served as Deacon, Financial Secretary, Sunday School Visitor, and President of the Sick Society and Clothing Club. An interesting meeting was held, when the senior male class met to present Mr. George Fairbrother, their President, with a beautiful and elegant picture containing portraits of 44 of the scholars, with the teacher as the central figure. The meeting was presided over by Mr. John Isherwood, the secretary of the class, who called upon Mr. Alfred Davies, as the oldest member of the class, to make the presentation to Mr. Fairbrother, which was appropriately done. Mr. Fairbrother with much feeling thanked the members of the class for the practical proof they had thus given of their regard for him, and urged them to continue to gather round him at the class, and to follow Jesus, the greatest of all teachers. The following is the inscription on the picture :—

“ Presented to Mr. George Fairbrother, by the Members of the Young Men’s Class in connection with the Derby Street Congregational Sunday School, as a small token of the respect and esteem in which they hold him as their Teacher and President.

“ January 28th, 1888.”

The starting of a Mission in Deane came up for discussion at the Church Members’ tea meeting on June 20th, 1888, and Mr. Preston laid it pretty clearly before the meeting, and advocated this Church starting the Mission here. Mr. Fairbrother gave it his support and promised to help it all he could. After a favourable discussion the following resolution was adopted by the meeting :—

“ That this Church commence a Mission at Deane, and that the Deacons make the best arrangements they can.”

Accordingly, in the year 1888, a cottage was rented, and a Sunday School opened, with occasional preaching services. Then a second cottage was added to the first, the partition wall being removed, so that decent accommodation might be provided for the increasing number of scholars. The development and success of this work here is recorded later.

With his 70th year Mr. Scullard attained the jubilee year of his ministry, which began in the year 1841, when he entered upon the pastorate of the Congregational Church, Fakenham, Suffolk. After a successful ministry there of six years, he accepted a call to Mill Hill, Blackburn, where he remained for twelve years. He then filled the pastorate of Woodbridge, Suffolk ; Belper, and New Chapel, Horwich. From Horwich he removed to Bolton, at the earnest invitation of the workers at Derby Street to take the oversight of them there. Of the work he did for Derby Street Church, or of the love and esteem in which he was held by his people there it is needless to speak. These are well known, the present building being erected and paid for, and such work done that it endeared pastor and people in no ordinary way. By his ministerial brethren Mr. Scullard was held in the highest respect. Indeed, all who knew him must acknowledge his sincere and unaffected piety, his kind and hopeful disposition, his willingness to help in any good work, and the indomitable energy and courage with which he carried out everything he had in hand. Few men have more commended the Gospel they preached than did Mr. Scullard. This was very fittingly shown when the members of Derby Street Church and School, met together on Saturday, March 3rd, 1888, to congratulate the rev. gentleman and to present him with tokens of their esteem.

The movement originated with the past and present members of the first female class, which he taught for many years. Mr. Scullard was invited to take tea with them, and he, of course, at once accepted the invitation, being in ignorance of the direct purpose of the gathering, but instead of only meeting members of his class he found over 100 of his congregation and scholars at tea. This number was largely increased at the meeting held afterwards, over which Mr. Joseph Winward, one of the superintendents, presided.

The chairman warmly eulogised the services rendered to

the Church by the class, and also congratulated Mr. Scullard upon attaining his 70th year.

Miss S. J. Longworth, one of the teachers, and a former member of the class, then presented to Mr. Scullard a beautifully illuminated address and marble timepiece, bearing the following inscription :—

“Presented to the Rev. H. H. Scullard for the high regard which his class has for him as a Teacher. March 3rd, 1888.”

The rev. gentleman, upon whom the presentation had come as a complete surprise, was visibly affected on rising to respond. He tendered to the class his heartfelt thanks for that substantial evidence of the kindness which was felt by his scholars towards him. He thanked them not for the presents only, but more especially because they assured him that he had been some service to them in encouraging a higher spiritual life.

Owing to the state of his health, the Rev. H. H. Scullard resigned his charge here, and this resignation was considered and accepted at the Church meeting on April 7th, 1889. There did not seem to be any probability of Mr. Scullard being able for a long time to resume his pastoral work, and therefore, after having had the great joy of holding this office among the people here for 15 years, he felt compelled to resign it. The state of his health made it impossible for his people to do anything but accept it, and the two oldest members—Mr. H. B. Preston and Mrs. Moore—were called upon to move and second this acceptance, and this they did in a very touching manner.

Much sympathy was expressed to the friends there at this time in their difficult and trying circumstances. The bond between them and their pastor was an unusually strong one, and made the idea of severance a very painful one.

He died at the beginning of 1890, and a Memorial Service was held in Derby Street Church on Sunday evening, January 19th, 1890, when a large congregation assembled to show their respect to their late pastor.

CHAPTER XLVII.

DEANE MISSION EXTENSION.

Deane First Annual Sermons—Call to Rev. J. D. Thomas—His Career—Presentation—Welcome to Mr. Thomas—Recognition and Welcome Meetings.

The first annual sermons in connection with the Deane Mission, were preached on July 14th, 1889, by the Rev. J. D. Thomas, of Runcorn. The services were held in a tent, which was erected in a field close by, kindly lent by Mr. Jones, and were well attended both afternoon and evening, the collections amounting to nearly £13. The workers at Deane were glad of all the help that could be given to them at this time, as they were very anxious to set about erecting a new place to carry on Christ's work in this corner of His vineyard. The cottage which they were then occupying was not very convenient, and far too small for the number of scholars that met on a Sunday. The whole work, both at Derby Street and its Mission was being well sustained.

The question of a successor to Mr. Scullard, being well to the front at this time, a special Church meeting was held on July 15th, 1889, when a unanimous decision to give a call to the Rev. J. D. Thomas, was agreed upon, a decision which was confirmed at the next meeting on July 22nd, and a call signed by Robert Hunt, George Fairbrother, Joseph Winward, George Clarkson, Bernard Preston, and Peter Jones, as Deacons, was forwarded to Mr. Thomas.

He was present at the week-evening service on July 31st, and intimated his acceptance of this call. Mr. Thomas was trained at the Independent College, Bala, entering at the early age of 16, and was ordained about four years after, his first charge being the Congregational Church, Buckley, Flintshire. He remained at Buckley six years, his pastorate being signalised by the erection of a new Church, which he had the pleasure of leaving free from debt.

In May, 1879, Mr. Thomas removed to Bethesda Congregational Church, Runcorn. On undertaking the pastorate there he found a membership of 70 persons. When he left it

was 112. A manse was also built during his stay at a cost of £750.

At Runcorn, Mr. Thomas did a good deal of successful mission work, and it was hoped that he would do the same in his new sphere. There was a crowded congregation at Bethesda on the evening of July 28th, when he closed his ministry there.

A good congregation assembled to welcome Mr. Thomas at the morning service, when he commenced his ministry on September 1st, 1889. In the course of his sermon he gave his views on the position and duties of a minister of the Gospel. Having fulfilled two pastorates successfully, he spoke with the force of experience. Then of an average stature and slender build, though yet a comparatively young man, he was a presentable figure in the pulpit. His style unassuming, he evidently trusted more to the message than to himself as messenger. Nature had blessed him with a good voice, which he knew how to use, and his vocabulary was fairly copious. His discourse had evidently been carefully prepared, though his manuscript did not hold him in bondage, and he often spoke "face to face." At the close one was left with the impression that the Derby Street Church had called one who would worthily fill the pulpit and prove himself "a workman that needed not to be ashamed."

On Thursday, September 5th, a deputation waited upon the Rev. J. D. Thomas, formerly pastor of Bethesda Congregational Chapel, Runcorn, and then pastor of Derby Street Congregational Church, to make a presentation to him on behalf of the subscribers. Mr. Simpson handed him a purse containing £25, which had been subscribed for by members of various denominations, as a token of the respect in which he was held as a citizen during his ten years' residence in Runcorn. Mr. Spencer remarked that Mr. Thomas had done good work, which was appreciated by everyone. Mr. Thomas, in accepting the gift, thanked the subscribers for their goodwill, and said he was sorry to part with many friends at Runcorn, where he had always met with kindness.

On Wednesday evening, September 25th, 1889, the members of the Church and Congregation mustered in large numbers to be introduced to the new pastor and his wife.

After all had been presented, a short meeting was held, during which Mr. Thomas spoke of the welcome he had received, of the work that had to be done, and of the means he intended using in the doing of the work.

The Welcome tea meeting was held on September 25th, 1889, and the senior Deacon, Mr. Hunt, gave the welcome to Mr. Thomas, on behalf of the Church and Congregation. The meeting was a crowded one, and enthusiasm prevailed.

A large and representative congregation assembled on October 19th, 1889, to witness the public recognition of the Rev. J. D. Thomas, as pastor. The chair was taken by Henry Lee, Esq., who was supported by the Revs. J. R. Wolstenholme, H. Turner, G. Hugo Heynes, J. W. Paul, I. Dearnley, W. Hewgill, J. F. Munro, R. Lambert, and others.

The chairman said he was most happy to be present and to renew his acquaintance with that Church. He stood in very close relationship to it, because of circumstances under which it started in the Sunnyside Institute, and because of the people who constituted the Church, most of them being employed at the Sunnyside Mills.

After a short devotional service, Mr. Lee expressed the pleasure it was to him to preside on such an occasion, and after referring to his relationship to the Church there, urged the friends by the success of the past to do their best to secure still greater results. He then called upon Mr. Winward, who read a letter from the late pastor, the Rev. H. H. Scullard, which was peculiarly interesting and affectionate, and must have been encouraging to both pastor and people.

Mr. Winward then read an interesting statement on behalf of the Deacons. After briefly reviewing the history of the Church and making a feeling mention of the reasons which led to the retirement of Mr. Scullard, he explained how they had been led to think of Mr. Thomas, and how after much prayerful deliberation the Church had extended to him a unanimous call. The Rev. J. D. Thomas followed with a statement of the reasons which led him to accept the invitation to the pastorate. This brief statement created a favourable impression. Those who listened to it felt that Derby Street had got a good minister and one who would faithfully declare



DERBY STREET CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

to them the truth as it is in Jesus. The Rev. H. W. Turner then led the congregation in prayer, earnestly commanding minister and people to God.

Several addresses were delivered, the first speaker being the Rev. J. W. Paul, secretary of the Cheshire Congregational Union, who, after giving good testimony to the character and ability of Mr. Thomas, spoke on the relation of pastor to people.

He was followed by the Rev. H. Banks, the first pastor of Derby Street, who in a humorous address touched on some of the duties of people towards pastor.

The Rev. J. R. Wolstenholme, speaking on behalf of the Bolton Churches, gave Mr. Thomas a very hearty welcome, which was re-echoed by the Rev. G. Hugo Heynes as representing the other Nonconformist bodies, and by the Rev. H. Hewgill speaking on behalf not only of Farnworth but of the Lancashire County Union. After a few words from the Rev. J. F. Munro, the benediction was pronounced, the friends adjoining to the schoolroom where an excellent tea awaited them.

The evening meeting was even larger than the afternoon one, affording the new minister the best assurance of the good wishes of the Bolton Churches. At this meeting Mr. Thomas took the chair and expressed his appreciation of the welcome which had been extended to him, and of his strong hope that a prosperous future was before them. In reference to a promise made by Mr. Lee that if the Church would raise £350 by January 1st, 1891, he would give £50, Mr. Thomas expressed the hope that they would be able to claim it and so be free from the incubus of a ground rent. Brief and stirring addresses were given, and Derby Street Church is to be congratulated on the success of these gatherings, and the hope is expressed that they there will continue to do noble work for Christ and Congregationalism in Bolton.

Several new features were introduced into the services this year with great success. The members of the Evangelisation Society held an open-air service in the district on Monday evening, November 18th, 1889, several members delivering earnest, stirring addresses. This was the commencement of what was intended to be a series of outdoor meetings, and was well attended, giving great encouragement to the friends here.

In the course of his sermon the Rev. J. D. Thomas gave fitting expression to the love they bore to their old pastor, and the esteem in which they held him, for his work's sake.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

NEW CHURCH BUILT.

Challenge Gift Earned—Death of Mr. Winward—25th Anniversary—Alteration of School—Opening of Organ—Resolution to Build New Church—Raising the Money—Memorial Stone Laid—Opening Services—Alterations to School-Chapel—Bazaar Results—Resolution of Thankfulness.

Strong efforts were made during the year 1890 to raise the sum of £350, so that Mr. Henry Lee's challenge gift of £50 might be claimed. When this was accomplished both Church and land would be entirely free.

To celebrate the accomplishment of this effort, a novel service was celebrated on the first Sunday morning service in the year 1891. It was a thanksgiving service, the effort to free the land having been successful. The Rev. J. D. Thomas conducted this and delivered a short sermon, being followed by Messrs. Joseph Winward and G. Fairbrother. It was altogether a delightful and most appreciated service.

On Sunday, the 24th of May, 1891, Mr. William Winward passed away. He had been a faithful member of the Church at Derby Street almost from the beginning of its history, and had lived a consistent Christian life.

The celebration of the 25th anniversary (1867 to 1892) was held on October 8th and Sunday, October 9th, 1892, and special meetings and services were held in connection therewith by Mr. Thomas.

Complaints were made by the teachers from time to time of the crowded state of the schoolroom, and various suggestions were offered for altering the old building, so as to provide additional accommodation at the minimum of cost. With the introduction of the P.S.A. these complaints were augmented in force, but the Finance Committee did not see how the ways and means were to be provided for any reconstruction or addition which would be likely to prove effectual.

Ultimately a meeting of the Church and Congregation was summoned for Wednesday evening, July 26th, 1893, at which, after considerable discussion, it was resolved to build a new Church on the (then) vacant plot of land adjoining the School-Chapel, and that not a stone or brick should be laid until the cash in hand, or in good promises, amounted to the sum of £2,500. Subsequently a strong committee was elected to carry out the project.

At first it was thought that it would take at least five years to bring the scheme to a successful issue, and several of the promises of our own people, which in the course of a few months amounted to more than £300, were made on that understanding. But they had not been long at work when Providence quickened their pace by means of two promises—one of £1,000 from an anonymous donor, and another of £100 from James Lever, Esq. These generous gifts advanced them more than a year or two towards the consummation of their wishes, and when, subsequently, the Executive Committee of the Bolton and District Congregational Council promised £400; the Lancashire and Cheshire Chapel Building Society, £400; Henry Lee, Esq., £100; and Messrs. Tootal, Broadhurst, Lee and Co., Ltd., £200; with other and smaller gifts bringing up the total “in cash and good promises” to more than £2,500, they felt that they were in a position to move. After inspecting a number of likely buildings in different designs, the Committee fixed upon one which they supposed was admirably suited to their needs, and Mr. Walter R. Haworth, architect, was instructed to prepare plans accordingly. His design, before being finally adopted by the Committee, was submitted to, and approved of, by all the principal donors. Tenders were asked for from various builders in the town, and finally that of Messrs. E. D. Maginnis was accepted for £4,186.

On June 27th, 1894, the following resolution is recorded in the minutes :—

“That this meeting of the Members of Derby Street Congregational Church has heard with pleasure and thankfulness of the promise of £1,000, which has been made to the District Congregational Council, for the new Church at Derby Street, and desires the Secretary of the said Council to convey to the anonymous donor its grateful appreciation of his generous gift.”

The work was commenced early in June, 1895, the memorial stones being laid on the 27th day of the succeeding month by E. B. Dawson, Esq., J.P., of Lancaster ; Alderman B. A. Dobson, Mayor of Bolton ; and Lennox Lee, Esq., of Manchester ; Harold Lee, Esq., officiating as chairman. Prior to the stone-laying a brief statement was made by the Rev. J. D. Thomas, and a short exposition of Congregational principles was given by the Rev. Samuel Pearson, M.A., of Broughton Park, Manchester. Mr. Pearson again officiated at the first opening service on Tuesday evening, October 13th, 1896 ; and at the subsequent services the following gentlemen preached :—Revs. T. Hallett Williams, Sale ; W. J. Woods, B.A., London ; Dr. Adamson, Windermere ; George Barber ; H. W. Turner, B.A. ; T. Langford Burrows, and the pastor.

Since the opening of the new building, the old one has been depleted of its pews, nearly the whole of which have been utilised at the Mission and in class-rooms, and forms easily moved have been substituted for them ; whilst in the sides revolving shutters have been placed, so as to cut off the various classes one from another. Hence both rooms—upper and lower—are now used for Sunday School purposes, the juniors on the ground floor and the seniors in what was formerly the chapel. And how thoroughly the whole enterprise has been justified is shown by the weekly increase in the number of scholars, and by the numerous additions to the congregation. Whereas for twelve years the Sunday School had been practically stationary, it has grown since the completion of the extension scheme about 25 per cent.

But all this cost money. The total outlay was not less than £4,386, towards which was received in promises £3,075, but in actual cash only £2,286, so that they stood face to face with an actual deficit of £2,100. It was to reduce this burden that "The United Kingdom Bazaar," was held. The bazaar held in February, 1897, gladdened the hearts of the workers here by realising a little over £400.

During 1896 the Derby Street people made such alterations to the old Chapel as were felt to be justified in adapting it to Sunday School purposes, and they were pronounced a success. There were two schools arranged in the same building, the junior in the lower room, and the senior in the upper room,

the latter being occupied for the first time on December 20th. On the previous Saturday evening an enlarged photograph of the late pastor was unveiled by his son, the Rev. H. Scullard, M.A., of Southport, who was accompanied by two of his sisters. It was an interesting occasion, and will long be remembered by those who were privileged to be present.

On Sunday, January 17th, 1897, special services were held in connection with the opening of the organ. The Rev. Dr. Johnstone, of Bowker's Row, preached in the morning, and a musical service, consisting of selections from the "Messiah," was given at night by an augmented choir, with Mr. W. R. Hampson, of the Saviour's, presiding at the organ. Under the able leadership of Mr. Miles Topping, all did their work well. The capabilities of the organ, however, were not fully displayed till the following Wednesday evening, when Mr. J. R. Griffiths, organist of Christ Church, Westminster Bridge, gave a recital which elicited frequent rounds of applause. All agreed that an excellent instrument had been secured at moderate cost.

On Sunday evening, May 8th, 1898, the following resolution was read by the pastor and carried by the Church and Congregation :—

"That we desire to place on record our deep gratitude to Almighty God for the many friends which he has raised up to us, and for the abundant help which he has given us through them in the building of our new house of worship, and having heard of an additional generous donation, which is conditionally promised on our raising at least £300, we hereby pledge ourselves to raise that amount, and at the same time express our thanksgiving for the noble challenge of our anonymous benefactor."

CHAPTER XLIX.

CONTINUING THE WORK.

Celebration of 25 Years' Service—Debt Extinction—Deane School-Chapel Built—Deaths of Robert Hunt and Mr. Henry Lee—Resignation of Mr. Thomas—Close of Ministry—Call to the Rev. Maldwyn Johnes, and Its Acceptance—Start of Ministry—Workers for Christ—Book by Mr. Thomas—Alterations to School Premises—Present Officers—Death of Mr. Joseph Winward.

On the last Sunday in May, 1898, Mr. Thomas celebrated the completion of 25 years' service as a Congregational pastor, his ministry having been begun at Buckley, Flintshire, on the first Sunday in June, 1873. With the new year, 1899, it was intended to form a branch Church at Deane.

In consequence of the large measure of prosperity which attended this mission, it was found necessary to prepare for the erection of new premises. The sanction of the Derby Street Church having been obtained, a committee was formed for the purpose of securing a site, the cost of the building being fixed at £1,500 and no building operations to be commenced until two-thirds of this sum had been secured.

Mr. W. H. Lever, with his usual generosity, gave a wonderful lift to the movement by promising a donation of £500. Messrs. F. W. Warbrick and G. E. Cooper acted on this committee, and help was obtained from all sources.

Strenuous efforts were made by the Derby Street people during the year 1898, in order to earn the challenge gift of £1,000. The conditions relating to this were fulfilled, and all rejoiced over the practical extinction of what was regarded as a heavy and discouraging debt. The £1,000 was well earned.

On Sunday, January 8th, 1899, the first observance of the Lord's Supper at the Deane Mission was held, 27 communicants being present. The Rev. J. D. Thomas presided, and Messrs. Winward and Davies attended as Deacons from Derby Street. There was a promise of great things at this Mission, and the faithful labours of past years were bearing fruit.

The Deacons having decided to visit Deane Mission, and ascertain the position of affairs there regarding the proposed

new mission building, it was pointed out that Mr. Lever had promised £500, and that there was a fund of £45 in hand. Mr. Thomas therefore gave notice that at the next Church meeting he would move a resolution that the proposed new premises at Deane be seriously entertained.

This meeting was held on August 30th, 1899, and the resolution reads :—

“ That having regard to the prosperity which has attended the Mission at Deane, and the urgent need for increased accommodation, this meeting thinks the time has come for, and hereby authorises the Building Committee, to be subsequently elected, to proceed to the selection of a site for new premises, and the erection of a building to cost not more than £1,500, but that no building operations shall be begun until the sum in hand, in good promises or cash, amounts to £1,000.”

This was moved by Mr. Lockett, seconded by Mr. Preston, and carried.

Ultimately it became necessary to find more commodious premises, and the present School-Chapel was built in 1901, and now a most effective and progressive work is being carried on there under the guidance of Mr. Arthur Lamb.

On November 1st, 1899, on the motion of the Rev. J. D. Thomas, and with Mr. G. Fairbrother as the seconder, it was resolved :—

“ To place on record the high appreciation of the character and faithful services of Mr. Robert Hunt, who for twenty-seven years was a constant member of the Church, and for most of the time had rendered efficient service as Deacon, Church Treasurer, Sunday School Superintendent, and latterly as Sunday School Visitor.”

Thus Mr. Hunt’s passing is recorded and another brave worker had gone to his reward.

The following gentlemen were elected as the Building Committee for the Deane Mission, on the motion of Mr. B. Massey, seconded by Mr. R. Hunt, and carried unanimously : Messrs. Preston, Lever, Warbrick, G. Cooper, J. Jones, Fyles, Edmondson, Wood, Sharples ; and the following were chosen to represent Derby Street Church on the committee : Messrs. J. Bromiley, J. Winward, P. Jones, G. Reason, A. Davies, and G. Fairbrother. On December 30th, 1900, a scheme for working this Mission was drawn up and approved.

At the Church Meeting on December 28th, 1904, it was resolved that a copy of the following resolution should be sent to the family of the late Mr. Henry Lee :—

"We, the Members of the Derby Street Congregational Church, having heard of the death of Mr. Henry Lee, do hereby express our sincere condolence with all the members of the deceased's family in their great bereavement, and our heartfelt wish that they may experience the rich consolations of the everlasting Gospel. We further desire to place on record our admiration for the deceased's nobility of character, both as a large employer of labour in this town, and as a private citizen, whose benefactions to us as a Church has been large at different times, and whose public example was always an inspiration and worthy of imitation."

The Rev. J. D. Thomas resigned his charge in March, 1905. A few weeks previously he announced his intention of severing his connection with the Church, and a meeting of the members regretfully accepted his resignation. During his long connection with the Church he took the greatest interest in Christian work in the town and district, and for some years officiated as editor of the *Congregational Magazine*.

Mr. Thomas closed his ministry on Sunday, September 3rd, 1905. His pastorate had extended over 16 years, and he preached his first as well as his last sermon in the Church on a first Sunday in September. There were large congregations at the services, and the parting was evidently keenly felt by the respected pastor and worshippers. At the close of his sermon at night, Mr. Thomas gave a short statement. He referred to the domestic afflictions he had suffered, and asked for forgiveness if he had not, owing to that fact, been able to do so much with regard to the people as he might otherwise have done. He feelingly thanked everybody for the kindly thought and feeling they had displayed towards him during his pastorate, and at the conclusion of the communion service, which was afterwards held, Mr. Thomas shook hands with each communicant on leaving.

The Church was without a pastor for over twelve months, and eventually a decision respecting a fresh one was decided upon at the ordinary and special Church Meetings which were held on February 18th, 1907, when Mr. Billinge moved, and Mr. R. Massey seconded, that a call should be given to the Rev. Maldwyn Johnes, of Manchester, and a letter intimating this decision was sent to him on behalf of the Church. This was signed by J. H. Morris, G. C. Reason, and R. Yates.

The meeting of the Church and Congregation on February 24th, 1907, confirmed this, and on February 25th, the real call

was sent. This is signed by Messrs. Peter Jones, Joseph Winward, J. H. Morris, James Kay, T. B. Goodman, G. C. Reason, and Richard Yates.

A letter of acceptance from Mr. Johnes was read to the members on March 5th, 1907, and the reception and welcome to the new pastor was arranged later to be held on June 1st, and his services commenced on June 2nd, 1907.

Mr. Johnes' labours here are greatly acceptable to his people, and his work is being crowned with success. His Christian character and helpfulness are a great blessing to all with whom he comes in contact.

It is not so easy to tell the story of the building of character which the material structures have made possible. And yet this, if it could be told, is the real history of the Church. Suffice it to say that the records give ample proof that the Church has at all periods had a keen sense of its spiritual mission. There are few "great" names associated with the history of the Church; its ministry has been accomplished almost entirely in the lives of industrial people, and the names of many of them are recorded in the Book of Life for their patient service and their steadfast faith.

On July 3rd, 1907, a letter of testimony in the name of the Church, to the Christian character of Mr. John Billinge, who was seeking admission into the College at Nottingham, with the object of devoting himself to the ministry of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, was sent to Principal Ritchie of this College.

A letter of the same kind, on behalf of Mr. Arthur Holden, who was seeking admission into the College at Hackney to prepare himself for the ministry, was also sent on behalf of this Church, on May 31st, 1911.

Under the title of "Drinks from Bible Wells," a series of sermons given by the Rev. J. D. Thomas, was printed and published by T. Beaty Hart, Kettering, in 1909. This little book is affectionately dedicated to the memory of the late Mr. James Lever, Mr. Edward Carr Deakin, and Mr. Henry Lee. Also to Mr. Thomas Wilkinson, J.P., happily surviving, and who more than any others assisted Mr. Thomas in the great task of his life.

This book was sold to help to defray the cost of the Organ. Although settled in Matlock at this time, his interest

in Bolton affairs was as great as ever, and his tribute to the gentlemen named is a good one.

Of Mr. Lever, he says : " I had never conversed with Mr. Lever till one Sunday morning after I had preached in St. George's Road Church. He met me at the foot of the pulpit stairs. Extending his hand in cordial greeting, he said, ' I hear that you are thinking of a new Church in Derby Street,' I replied that we had talked of it, but that no definite steps had been taken. ' Well, as soon as your building is half-way up, write to me, and I'll give you a hundred pounds.' His was absolutely the first promise, and it supplied the necessary stimulus at the right moment, and all the more as it was unsought. I need not say that the promise was promptly fulfilled."

Mr. Edward Carr Deakin, of Belmont and Egerton, appears to have taken a strong liking to Mr. Thomas from the early days of his arrival in Bolton.

In the list of subscribers to the new Congregational Church, Derby Street, his name only appears for a small amount, but he veiled his gifts under anonymity, and his contributions to this fund were not far short of £2,000. This was not given direct, but through the Bolton District Congregational Council.

When the new building had been opened, and the builder's complete account sent in, the total cost greatly exceeded the contract price. After consultation with the Deacons and others, a special prayer meeting was called, and this was full of child-like confidence in God. The following day Mr. Thomas received a note from the late Mr. Fred Cooper to the effect that a gentleman had called on him that morning to ask the amount of the Church indebtedness. As soon as possible, full particulars were sent to Mr. Cooper, and before the end of the same week the same gentleman had been to see him again, stating that he would contribute a thousand pounds on condition that the whole debt was cleared off by the end of the year. The challenge was taken up with magnificent courage, and the desired result achieved.

Mr. Henry Lee's connection appears in the narrative.

Mr. Wilkinson's connection was in the form of ample donations at various times, which have been a great help to the Church in its struggles for financial freedom.

A special meeting of Church and Congregation was held on July 14th, 1909, to consider the question of alterations to the school premises in order to make them efficient for up-to-date methods of work. Mr. Pringle outlined the scheme of alterations necessary as submitted by the sub-committee appointed to consider the question, and the sketch plans of the Architect were open for inspection.

The following are the present officers of the Church :— Pastor : Rev. Maldwyn Johnes ; Deacons : George Fairbrother, Peter Jones, S. Small, John Atkinson, Thomas Parkinson, William Massey, and J. C. Morris.

The Finance Committee consists of the Deacons, and Messrs. E. T. Jones, Joseph Wood, J. W. Roberts, James Kay, Harold Rainford, J. C. Morris, H. Hall, Owen Hughes, Thomas Lockett, Arthur Sheppard, and Richard Bamber.

One of the oldest workers in connection with this place of worship died in 1909, and a letter of condolence was forwarded in the following terms :—

“ We, the members of the Derby Street Congregational Church in meeting assembled, desire to place on record our deep sense of the loss we have sustained by the death of Mr. Joseph Winward. For over 30 years he served this Church and School with exemplary patience, faithfulness, and consistent sincerity. By his grace and virtue, and by his self-sacrificing service, he enriched the life of this Church and endeared himself to all who knew him. Whether as Secretary or Superintendent of the Sunday School, as Secretary of the Church, or Deacon, conscientiousness was ever a characteristic of his work, and the memory of his devoted life will long be a gracious inspiration to us. Our affectionate sympathy goes out to his sorrowing widow and daughter, and we pray that God will guide and comfort them through all the coming years, and fill their hearts with Eternal Peace.”

CHAPTER L.

ORIGIN OF BLACKBURN ROAD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

Founder—Start of Mission—Land for Church Acquired by Mr. Davison—Taken by Deacons—School Re-built and Enlarged—Land Fenced—Missioner Appointed—Mr. Caleb Williams.

The Rev. William Hope Davison is entitled to all the credit for starting the interest at Blackburn Road Church.

Always on the look out for carrying the cause into other parts of our district, this gentleman purchased a house on his own responsibility in Blackbank Street (in which at that time a man kept a small school going), with the idea of being able to start some interest there. Two cottages connected as one would probably describe the place better, and here, early in 1871, the mission started, a small band of members of the mother church, who were always his ready and willing helpers, undertook the heavy and arduous work which always awaits those whose lot it is to open out in fresh fields and pastures new. They had, however, "a mind to work," and they did so with good results. There was a small plot of vacant land adjoining, and he subsequently got the St. George's Road Deacons to take that land and to build upon it an extension of the premises he had bought. This extension afterwards formed the Blackburn Road Old School as we knew it. Some little time after that, Mr. Davison, on his own initiative, took a vacant plot of land on Blackburn Road, on which the present Church now stands, and he held it for some time and paid the ground rent upon it. The St. George's Road people did not at first view this action with much favour because of the expenditure it would lead to, but eventually matters reached such a point that some decision was absolutely necessary. Accordingly, at the Deacons' Meeting, October 16th, 1871, Mr. James Holt laid a communication he had received from the Pastor, the Rev. W. Hope Davison, before the meeting, and stated that the Pastor had advertised the land in Blackburn Road for sale, and he hoped that he should soon be rid of it. After a lengthened conversation on the matter, the Deacons agreed unanimously :—

"That the land in question having originally been secured by Mr. Davison on behalf of the Church and for Church purposes, it was not desirable to dispose of it, but should be kept by the Deacons for the erection of a place of worship in connection with Blackbank Street Mission, especially now that we have the premises in Blackbank Street on our hands, and which, without the other land as a standby, would be of little use."

The Secretary, therefore, was instructed to see Mr. Davison as soon as possible, and request him to withdraw the advertisement, and they would take steps to refund him the money he had paid for ground rent, which the Deacons understood

amounted to £60. They also engaged for the future that this should be paid by the Committee. The Secretary (Mr. H. Webster) had an interview with Mr. Davison and he agreed to do as the Deacons requested him, and handed over the agreement which up to then he himself had held for the land in question.

Matters, however, in connection with the School also progressed, and soon the little room was found to be quite inadequate to contain the scholars who came in increasing numbers every Sabbath day, and a few months after the opening, the St. George's Road people met and decided to rebuild and enlarge the school. The decision relating to this is recorded in the motion passed on November 29th, 1871 :—

“That a block plan of the intended new school in Blackbank Street be made, so that it might be transmitted to the School Inspector, with the intimation that it was the intention of the Finance Committee to proceed with the building according to the plan.”

They again considered the matter on April 17th, 1872, and Mr. J. Smethurst moved, and Mr. D. Ottewill seconded :—

“That this meeting considers it advisable that the ceremony of laying the foundation stone of Blackbank Street School, be on April 27th, 1872, and that Mr. James Lever be requested to lay it.”

Thus it will be seen how peculiarly appropriate it was that the same gentleman should lay the Memorial Stone of the Church which was afterwards erected through the munificent generosity of his two sons. From this ceremony began the association of the Lever family with this Church, the interest in which grew and extended so rapidly as to culminate in the way it did.

A meeting of the General Committee was held on March 26th, 1872, to consider the propriety of offering Blackbank Street School to the School Board, and this course was adopted.

The new Congregational School-Church, Blackbank Street, was opened on October 20th, 1872, by the Rev. W. Hope Davison, who preached special sermons in the morning and evening in St. George's Road Church, and in the afternoon at the School-Church.

On Sunday, October 27th, 1872, the Rev. Caleb Scott, LL.B., preached at St. George's Road, morning and evening,

in connection with these opening services, and in the afternoon the Rev. W. Hope Davison gave a sermon to the children in the Blackbank Street School.

On Wednesday, October 30th, a tea meeting to celebrate this opening was held in the schoolroom, Blackbank Street, and addresses were delivered by various gentlemen. After tea Mr. Davison took the chair, and said they were met together in connection with the dedication of a new Congregational School-Church. The building had been certified by the Registrar General as a place set apart for public worship, and he gave as a sentiment : "Success to our new Church." The Congregationalists were strong advocates of religious freedom. He had been for twenty years a pastor in Bolton, and no one had ever attempted to interfere with his freedom of teaching, or even tried to dictate to him what particular doctrine he should preach. This was the fourth new church they had built during the time of his pastorate. The rooms they dedicated now were not intended to be closed during the week, but in addition to the day and night classes, they would be used as rooms where the working-men could go in and hold meetings.

The Rev. J. Cockram, of Tyldesley, the Rev. T. W. Handford, Mr. J. B. Parkinson, and Mr. Ormrod also spoke. Mr. Davison, as a final statement, said that when the Deacons found it was necessary to build, they had conference with him, and decided to build on a plot of ground near to the present building. They found that some persons were in the habit of meeting in it for worship, and therefore refused to purchase the building until they were told that those persons had refused to become permanent tenants of it, and were under notice to leave. They therefore took the building, and finding it was too small for their purpose, resolved to enlarge it, and the present building had been erected as the result. This was built from the plans of Mr. James Atherton, and cost £1,200.

The next step was taken on May 13th, 1872, when the Deacons recommended the Finance Committee to take some steps for fencing off the land in Blackburn Road, with the view for letting same temporarily.

In September, 1872, a movement was made in the direction of obtaining a suitable person to take charge of the Blackbank

Street interest, and at the Church Meeting held on October 2nd, 1872, at the mother Church, a resolution was moved by Mr. H. Webster and seconded by Mr. James Atherton, and carried unanimously :—

“ That the Pastor and Deacons be and are hereby requested to make such arrangements as in their judgment are desirable and fitting for the working of Blackbank Street Mission as a branch of this Church and Congregation, and that they be and are hereby empowered to secure the services of an assistant to the Pastor, who shall discharge such duties as they may from time to time determine and appoint.”

After due consideration and trials, a resolution was approved of at the Deacons’ Meeting held on January 13th, 1873, as follows :—

“ That Mr. Caleb Williams be engaged as an assistant to the Pastor, and for the working of Blackbank Street as a branch of this Church, at a remuneration then agreed upon.”

Rules and regulations were drawn up and approved of for guidance in the future working, and a copy was supplied to Mr. Williams, who was invited to accept the Pastorate on January 14th, 1873.

In addition to his services at Blackbank Street, Mr. Williams acted as curate for Mr. Davison on the Sunday morning, reading the lessons, and conducting the first part of the service. The scheme of duties drawn up provided times for study and visitation in the neighbourhood of Blackbank Street, and sets forth the order of services, which was : two services on Sunday at Blackbank Street Church, one in the afternoon at three o’clock, and the other in the evening at six o’clock. The week-evening engagements set aside Monday to be devoted to Temperance work, for which a committee consisting of the Deacons and Pastor and certain other gentlemen were appointed. On Tuesday evening a Prayer Meeting was to be held at Blackbank Street, and Wednesday evening service was at St. George’s Road. Thursday for the Men’s Society, and Friday for study. Saturday evenings were set aside for entertainments for working men and others. Mr. Williams accepted the conditions laid down, but resigned again at the end of three months.

The terms on which this branch Church was to be worked at this time are interesting, and are embodied in a letter which was sent from the vestry of St. George’s Road Church :—

"In accordance with resolutions passed at a meeting of the Deacons, the Pastor and Deacons have pleasure in inviting you to serve the Pastor as his assistant for the ensuing three months with a view to a permanent engagement in that capacity if on trial it should be mutually agreeable to continue the arrangement. They will through the Pastor furnish such directions for the discharge of the duties of the position as may seem to them on due deliberation to be acceptable and desirable. It is to be distinctly understood that the formation of a separate and independent Church at Blackbank Street or in connection therewith is expressly excluded from its fundamental basis. It is now and is to remain hereafter a branch of the Church at St. George's Road."

The scheme of duties that had been prepared by the Pastor and Deacons accompanied the letter, which is signed on their behalf by W. Hope Davison, Pastor, and Henry Webster as Secretary to the Deacons.

A statement has been made that Mr. Milligan and Mr. Davison acquired the land in their own names, but there is no evidence to that effect. Mr. Davison took the land himself, and when the Deacons decided to assume the responsibility for the same, then Mr. Milligan came in and found the £60 required to pay off Mr. Davison, and it was not until the committee meeting for finance purposes, that was held on July 9th, 1873, that Mr. D. Ottewill moved and Mr. R. Almond seconded :—

"That the £60 paid for ground rent by Mr. Davison for land on Blackburn Road be refunded."

To Mr. Milligan, of course.

This action saved the situation at that time, and enabled it to be possible for the present-day structure to be erected, and which is such a fine vindication of Congregational principles locally.

CHAPTER LI.

THE FIRST RECOGNISED MINISTER.

Mr. Latham's Mission Services—Details Relating to the Appointment of Mr. Clayton—His Acceptance—Lord's Supper Observance in the School—Connected with County Union.

At the Deacons' Meeting held on May 29th, 1873, Mr. Latham was next engaged to labour at Blackbank Street for one month, and this was extended for another three months on July 21st, 1873.

On September 8th, Messrs. J. B. Parkinson, B. Cole, James Holt, and H. Webster, were appointed to wait upon Mr. Latham to ascertain his views in reference to his labours at Blackbank Street Mission Church, and they did this on the 9th of September. At this interview Mr. Latham expressed a strong desire to enter the Institute at Nottingham, at the commencement of the next lessons. In the meantime he agreed to continue his labours.

At the Deacons' Meeting held on March 2nd, 1874, an intimation was given that Mr. Latham had terminated his labours at Blackbank Street with the view of entering the College at Nottingham. The result was a decision to secure, if possible, the services of Mr. Clayton, a student in the Lancashire Independent College, Manchester, he being highly recommended by Professor Scott. An enquiry was first made as to what position Mr. Clayton would hold in connection with the College, if he should accept the invitation to Blackbank Street, and commence his labours at once, and the following letter was received in answer thereto from Professor Scott :—

“ The decision of our Committee, after much discussion was, that option should be given to Mr. Clayton, either first, to resign his connection with the College, thus being at liberty to enter upon the work at Blackbank Street immediately, or, secondly, that he may accept the invitation to Blackbank Street, subject to such arrangements as may be deemed needful for the completion of his College course. In the first case he would not appear in the list of students' names, but he would be wholly unfettered, and would of course leave with the best wishes of all, and without any stigma whatever attaching to his character. In the second case, his attention would, up to Midsummer, 1875, be necessarily somewhat divided between the claims of College and Blackbank Street.”

The discussion caused by this position, resulted in a decision to send the following letter through Mr. Scott for the consideration of Mr. Clayton :—

“ Bolton, March 4th, 1874.

“ My Dear Sir,

“ At a Deacons' meeting held on Monday evening last, it was decided to lay before you the following statements for your consideration, and, if they meet with your approval, for your acceptance. First :—That the interest at Blackbank Street be carried on under our supervision on behalf of the Church at St. George's Road, until the time arrives when it may be deemed desirable to form a separate and independent Church of the same Faith and Order, as more particularly laid down and explained in the Trust Deed of the Congregational Church, St. George's Road, Bolton.

"Secondly:—That finding those now worshipping at Blackbank Street are very desirous that you should be invited to labour there, and this desire being also shared by us, we now on behalf of the Church offer for your acceptance the position on the terms named.

"Thirdly:—At the end of two years, such new arrangements to be made as may then be desirable and may be mutually agreed upon. I need hardly assure you that it would give the Deacons sincere pleasure to find a good congregation being gathered there, and to have a new and healthy interest established, so as to form, before long, a separate and Independent Church. And with this end in view, I may say they have taken and now hold a plot of land in Blackburn Road, near to the Blackbank Street School, as a site for a proposed new Church.

"In reference to the two propositions laid down by the College Committee for your consideration, the Deacons cannot recommend you to adopt the first and thus have your name taken from the list of students, they, however, think some arrangements may be made to enable you to serve the cause at Blackburn Road and still continue your course at the College until Midsummer, 1875. Praying that God may guide you to a right decision,

"I am,
"Yours truly,
"H. WEBSTER,
"Secretary to the Deacons."

From the Lancashire College on March 9th, 1874, the following letter was received from Mr. Clayton by Mr. Webster:—

"Dear Sir,

"Your communication through the kindness of Professor Scott came duly to hand.

"May I ask you to inform the gentlemen, the result of whose deliberations it embodies, that it shall receive the earnest and prayerful consideration its importance demands.

"Meanwhile, however, I will take advantage of your considerate suggestions, seeing that there are one or two points upon which a word of explanation may be desirable.

"In resolution first, you use the word 'supervision.' Will you kindly inform me whether that is to be understood as including the future Pastor of St. George's Road Church, together with representatives from the Congregation worshipping at Blackbank Street, or the Deacons of St. George's Road Church only. Further, will you kindly inform me whether I am to understand the desire which the Deacons express 'that a healthy interest be soon formed' is intended as an expectation that in the time specified, such a result might be accomplished. From my own observation, also, from what I have heard from those who have engaged in similar undertakings, I should think that the time is too limited. However, remembering the generosity of the gentlemen with whom I should have to deal, I shall not regard this as a promissory matter. I should like to read the Trust Deed on my next visit to Bolton.

"I am,
"Yours sincerely,
"J. E. CLAYTON."

The result of this letter was a communication from the Deacons, which gives explanations, and states the position taken up by St. George's Road at that time, so that one is constrained to copy the letter in full :—

“ St. George's Road, Bolton,
“ Dear Sir, “ March 18th, 1874.

“ In reference to the management of Blackbank Street, the Deacons wish it to be distinctly understood that so long as the cause at Blackbank Street continues its present relations as a branch interest with the Church at St. George's Road, it must of necessity be under the management or supervision of the Pastor and Deacons on behalf of the Church, along with whoever may be appointed to labour there as minister by the Church.

“ All financial matters would continue to be in the control of the Finance Committee at St. George's Road as hitherto, and several of those labouring at Blackbank Street, are members of that committee.

“ So far as our expectations go in reference to the progress of the work in the time specified, we have only to say that there is a fine field for active and energetic labour, which, with God's blessing upon the efforts of those working there, may in two years have so far altered the aspect of affairs, as to render fresh arrangements absolutely necessary. This is the only reason for fixing the time named.

“ The Trust Deed of St. George's Road Congregational Church has been submitted to you, and in conclusion we may say that your official labours (provided you agree to accept the call) would be entirely devoted to the cause at Blackbank Street.

“ Yours truly,
“ H. WEBSTER,
“ Secretary to the Deacons.”

“ Mr J. E. Clayton, Lancashire Independent College.”

On March 24th, 1874, the following letter of acceptance of the call was received and considered by the Deacons :—

“ Dear Sir,

“ I have given the earnest and prayerful consideration to the several letters of this correspondence which their importance called for, and I feel I am now in a position to make known the decision at which I have arrived, and which I unhesitatingly communicate from the fact, that it has the support of my best and most experienced friends.

“ My decision is that I accept the invitation of the Deacons of St. George's Road Church to the work of the Christian Ministry at the mission station of that Church in Blackbank Street.

“ As it is the desire of the friends at Blackbank Street, and which desire probably has received your approval, as it has that of Professor Scott, that I should enter upon the duties during or shortly after the Easter Recess, it may be advisable to come to an understanding upon the matter. Asking for the prayerful sympathy of yourself and fellow Deacons.

“ I remain,

“ Yours very truly,
“ J. E. CLAYTON.”

Mr. Clayton therefore entered on his duties as minister of the Church which then worshipped in the old School in Blackbank Street.

At the Deacons' Meeting held on December 21st, 1874, the following letter from Blackbank Street School was read :—

“ Gentlemen,

“ We the members of St. George's Road Congregational Church worshipping in the above school, feeling it very inconvenient to have to go to St. George's Road to partake of the Communion, would feel obliged if you would take it into your consideration and allow the Ordinance of the Lord's Supper to be observed in the above school. We also think it would be for the benefit of the Congregation and be the means of increasing our Members.”

This letter was referred to Mr. Clayton, with a request that he would give his opinion on the matter.

At the Deacons' Meeting on January 18th, 1875, this matter was further considered, and it was suggested as desirable that the Ordinance of the Lord's Supper be observed at Blackbank Street twice in the quarter, and that the Pastor (the Rev. C. A. Berry) and Mr. Clayton make the necessary arrangements. A further resolution on January 27th confirmed this with the proviso that the service be held the third month at St. George's Road. Mr. J. B. Parkinson was also appointed as the representative Deacon from this Church.

On December 20th, 1875, the Rev. C. A. Berry was requested by the Deacons to draw up the outline of a scheme for the purpose of connecting Blackbank Street Mission with the County Union.

On February 17th, 1876, the Deacons submitted the following resolution to the meeting of the Church and Congregation of St. George's Road, which was held that evening :—

“ That believing it will be for the present and future good of the Blackbank Street Mission, it is deemed desirable to place it under the direction of the Lancashire County Union, retaining the membership for the time as at present.

“ That to support the Union in this course we pledge ourselves to a contribution to its funds of fifty pounds per annum for two years, provided the Union maintain the Mission for that period.”

These resolutions were carried, and the subscription afterwards increased as requested by the Union.



THE OLD IRON CHURCH.

CHAPTER LII.

IRON CHURCH ERECTED AND OPENED.

Recommendation to Build—Funds Raised—Plan of Iron Church Adopted—Building Committee Appointed—Opening of Iron Church—Transfer to Trustees.

On July 17th, 1876, the Deacons recommended to the Church and Congregation, and the Finance Committee, the propriety of erecting a Temporary Church on Blackburn Road, in these words :—

“ Considering the present position of Blackbank Street Mission, the increasing population in the neighbourhood, and the expressed desire of the Congregation and Minister there.”

On August 7th, 1876, Mr. J. B. Parkinson reported that the Deacons recommended the building of an Iron Church on Blackburn Road according to the plans then presented, and the committee of Blackburn Road met the Finance Committee on August 14th, 1876, to consider the scheme, and after considerable discussion no resolution was arrived at, so the meeting was adjourned until August 24th, 1876, when the Rev. J. E. Clayton reported that a meeting had been held at Blackbank Street, and the committee there had considered the Deacons’ recommendation, and the following resolutions had been unanimously arrived at :—

“ That the best thanks of this committee be given to the Deacons of the Parent Church for their appreciation and ready recognition of the demands of the Mission at the present juncture, and express the earnest hope that the plan of Iron Church which with sketch of exterior we unanimously approve of, will be decided upon at the forthcoming adjourned meeting of the General Committee.”

The matter being favourably received, this was followed by a meeting of the Church and Congregation in the Lecture Hall on September 7th, 1876, when a decision was unanimously agreed upon to erect on Blackburn Road a temporary Iron Church, with a permanent boundary wall, at a cost not exceeding one thousand pounds, and a permanent Church to replace same when practicable.

In order to provide funds for the purpose it was agreed to hold a Grand Bazaar, and the handsome sum of £973 16s. 11d.

was the result. With characteristic generosity, the Congregation of St. George's Road decided to give the whole of the money to Blackburn Road if a permanent building were erected as soon as possible.

The resolution relating to this is as follows :—

“ That having regard to the difficulty which would be involved in having to raise some £400 towards the carrying out of the object we have in view, owing to the depressed state of trade and the avowedly temporary character of the proposed structure, this meeting is of opinion that the whole of the money resulting from the bazaar should be placed at the disposal of a properly constituted committee, to be used as circumstances may determine, and this meeting pledges itself in the name of the worshippers represented, that the annual rent charge on the land forming site of proposed Church, shall be duly paid.”

After some discussion of these resolutions, it was moved by Mr. Johnston and seconded by Mr. Jones, “ that the money should be placed in the hands of committee as proposed,” and this resolution carried.

The matter was then placed on a thoroughly satisfactory basis at a meeting of the Church and Congregation on September 7th, 1876, by the following resolutions :—

“ That in order to meet the special requirements of Congregationalism in the district of Blackburn Road, and to aid in the aggressive work of collecting and forming a Church, it is thought desirable to make some speedy arrangement for improved accommodation for public worship.

“ That this congregation approve the recommendation of committee and Deacons for the erection of a temporary Iron Church with permanent boundary wall at a cost not exceeding one thousand pounds, towards meeting which they consent to the money in the bank being used, upon the distinct understanding that in the future a permanent Church be erected as soon as possible on this site.

“ That the Committee of this Church, the Deacons, and the Committee of Blackbank Street, are hereby authorised to elect a Building Committee, to see the intention of the Congregation carried into effect.”

A meeting of the Joint Committees and Deacons was held on September 13th, 1876, to elect a Building Committee, and the following gentlemen were appointed :—Rev. C. A. Berry, Rev. J. E. Clayton, Messrs. J. B. Parkinson, Henry Webster, B. Cole, James Atherton, James Holt, James Smethurst, Messrs. Hutcheson, Garstang, Conroy, Dean, Harrison, E. Lowe, Johnston, D. Ottewill, and E. Haddock.

On January 14th, 1877, the new Iron Church on Blackburn Road was opened by the Rev. William Hope Davison, of

Chatham, in the morning in that building, and in the evening at St. George's Road Church, which was lent for that service, the congregation being a very large one. The service in the afternoon was conducted by the Rev. Robert Best, and on Tuesday the 16th inst., the services were continued by the Rev. R. Mitchell, of Harpurhey. On the Monday a tea meeting was held in the School, and a public meeting at the Church. Addresses were given by the Pastor of St. George's Road, the Rev. Charles A. Berry, the Rev. W. H. Davison, and others. Thomas Winder, Esq., was in the chair. On Sunday, the 21st inst, the Rev. S. Prenter, B.A., preached in the morning, the Rev. C. A. Berry in the afternoon, the Rev. Thomas Willis, of Grosvenor Street, Manchester, in the evening, and on the following Tuesday evening the Rev. J. Macdougal, of Darwen, preached.

On Sunday, the 28th inst., the Rev. Thomas Robinson, B.A., of Hyde, preached morning and evening, and in the afternoon a service to the young was held in the Church, the address being given by Mr. J. B. Parkinson. The amount received and promised at these services was about £150. The total cost of the Church and permanent wall was about £1,150.

At the Deacons' Meeting held on February 19th, 1877, in reply to a letter received from Mr. Clayton, the minister of Blackburn Road Mission Church, a resolution was moved and carried unanimously :—

“ That persons seeking Church Fellowship at Blackburn Road, come to any meeting at St. George's Road Church, but that notice be sent here to the Pastor one month before admission.”

At the Committee Meeting, November 1st, 1877, Messrs. James Atherton, Henry Webster, James Smethurst, and D. Ottewill were appointed as a sub-committee to transfer Black-bank Street School and Church into the hands of Trustees.

CHAPTER LIII.

GROWTH AND EXTENSION.

Enlargement of Day School—Trustees Appointed—Resignation of Mr. Clayton—Presentation to Him—Freedom from County Union—Trust Deeds—Call to Mr. Lambert—Debt Clearing—Becoming Independent—Mid-week Services—Committee of Enquiry—Day School Given Up—Mr. Lambert's Resignation—Letter from Mr. Wolstenholme—Call to Mr. Burrows.

A Building Committee for the enlargement of Blackbank Street Day School was appointed on June 1st, 1878, consisting of Messrs. R. Almond, James Atherton, Mr. Green, and H. Webster.

On September 16th, 1878, a resolution is recorded in the Books :—

“That the Trustees for the property on Blackburn Road and Blackbank Street consist of twelve from St. George's Road and eight from the friends on Blackburn Road, and that they be appointed and the property conveyed to them as speedily as possible.”

In May, 1882, Mr. J. E. Clayton received an invitation to the pastorate of the Whitworth Church, and to the general regret of his people he accepted this offer. Full of zeal and enthusiasm for his work here, the Church grew rapidly, and his labours were much blessed of God. For some eight years he had laboured in this his first pastorate, and gained for himself the love and respect of a growing Church. He was a faithful Minister of Jesus Christ, and his memory was long cherished by those worshipping with him at Blackburn Road Church.

Previous to his vacating the position of minister at this Church, a presentation of a very handsome illuminated address, bound in Morocco leather, and a purse of gold, was made to the Rev. J. E. Clayton, on May 27th, 1882. The Rev. C. A. Berry presided, and said he was sorry that Mr. Clayton was going away from them, but he thought they had reason to congratulate him on the elevation he had obtained. No Church, however strong, could pass through a time like this without feeling the separation, and for some little time the work of the place would be carried on with considerable diffi-

culty. A committee had been formed to take upon them the management of the pulpit supply, and the committee had upon it four members from each Church, with himself as chairman, and there was every likelihood of its successful working, if the people would render their hearty support.

The Rev. H. H. Scullard next addressed the meeting, and after expressing his sorrow at the removal of Mr. Clayton, said he believed he had been directed thereto by God's providence.

Mr. James Atherton sympathised with the Church, and expressed a desire for Mr. Clayton's future welfare. The following also addressed the meeting, the Revs. D. Williams, G. Williams (Astley Bridge Baptist), J. Davies, W. Wray, W. Sommerville, and also Messrs. B. Cole and J. B. Parkinson.

Mr. W. Mellor said the duty assigned to him was to present an address to their worthy pastor, and in expressing his heartfelt thanks for his labours amongst them, made the presentation on behalf of the members of the Church and Congregation. Mr. John White supported, and Mr. William Lander, in a practical address, speaking on behalf of the Sunday School, acknowledged his deep regret at losing Mr. Clayton, on whom he hoped God's blessing would rest. The Rev. J. E. Clayton suitably acknowledged the gift.

On Sunday, May 28th, 1882, Mr. Clayton preached his farewell sermons, at which some of the congregation were visibly affected.

The Sabbath School at this time had Messrs. Hutchinson and Rawlinson as Superintendents, with Mr. Colin Cooper, and Mr. William Lander as School Secretaries. The Day School was under the direction of Mr. J. Jones.

On the 30th of October, 1882, Mr. David Ottewill was authorised to obtain and secure promises of subscriptions, to be paid annually, to assist the Church on Blackburn Road in order that it might be free from the County Union.

The Trust and other Deeds of the Iron Church and School in Blackbank Street were in the possession of solicitors acting on behalf of Mr. Webster's Trustees, up to April 26th, 1883, when a letter was read from the solicitors, asking that the amount owing to the Trustees of the late Mr. Webster might be paid off in the course of a month. Also a letter from the

Secretary of the Blackburn Road Church Finance Committee, asking this Committee to find the amount required.

The result of the consideration of these letters was a resolution moved by Mr. Duxbury, and seconded by Mr. James Bromiley :—

“ That the matter of getting the money required be left in the hands of Mr. David Ottewill and Mr. J. Tyas Cooper.”

On March 3rd, 1884, a decision was made to give a call to Mr. Lambert, and this was further considered on the 10th inst., with a further provision :—

“ That if Mr. Lambert wished, as likely to increase his efficiency at Blackburn Road, that the Church there should be formed into an Independent Church, though grants in aid thereof would still be made by the parent Church.”

On March 30th, 1884, Mr. Lambert accepted this call, and his Recognition Service was fixed for Tuesday, July 7th, 1884.

The Sale of Work, held on Good Friday and Saturday, April 8th and 9th, 1887, is interesting from the fact that the people here were beginning to feel more self-reliant, and desired to do with a smaller grant from the mother Church at St. George's Road, and so gradually to work towards a more independent condition, and become a self-supporting Church. The Sale was opened by the Rev. J. R. Wolstenholme, who expressed his cordial sympathy with the objects of the bazaar. This Sale was more successful than its promoters anticipated, and realised over £55.

A strong effort to clear off the debt on Blackbank Street Schools was made by the members of St. George's Road during the year 1887, and at the Annual Meeting on January 25th, 1888, it was moved by Mr. James Atherton and seconded by Mr. Duxbury :—

“ That it be an instruction to the Finance Committee in connection with the celebration of the 25th Anniversary of the opening of the Church, to make an effort to raise at least £100, and out of it to pay the balance of the debt owing on Blackbank Street.”

At a meeting of the Church and Congregation on May 9th, 1888, a very important decision was come to. In view of the removal of the balance of the debt which had existed on the school buildings, and which was accomplished by the liberal contributions of St. George's Road Church, and in view of the success which had crowned the recent Sale of

Work, a spontaneous feeling seemed to spring up in the minds of many members of the congregation that they should make an effort towards a more complete self-support, and it was almost unanimously resolved at the above meeting :—

“ That they should not ask for any further grant from the mother Church at St. George’s Road, and that the best and heartiest thanks of all the workers at Blackburn Road be sent to all the friends at St. George’s Road for the kind and generous help rendered to us for so many years.”

This resolution meant a much greater responsibility upon this Church, but with sympathy and help on special occasions, the workers hoped and intended to bear it, and if, as was expected, a new enterprise was started very soon to erect a new and permanent Church building, they had confidence that they would have not only the counsel and generous help of the mother Church, but the sympathy and help of all the Congregational Churches in Bolton and District.

This matter was finally settled on June 7th, 1888, and the Title Deeds obtained and deposited in the muniment room of the Lancashire Independent College.

During September, 1889, as a result of a resolution on the part of Pastor and Deacons, confirmed by the Church Meeting, the Mid-week Services were re-organised with gratifying success. Seeking a larger attendance and more interest in the service, endeavours were made to make the service as bright, varied, and interesting as possible, by having two or three short pointed addresses, using Sankey’s hymns, and giving free scope for any member to utter a word of testimony, experience or prayer, to sing a solo, or in any way minister to the general good of the whole assembly. These meetings had the effect of more than doubling the usual attendance. At the same time also, it was resolved to commence a series of Cottage Services on Thursday evenings at various centres. This work was taken up with great heartiness, and in a prayerful spirit.

At a meeting of the Church and Congregation on Wednesday, December 18th, 1889, Mr. Fred Cooper moved, and Mr. Steele seconded, and the motion carried :—

“ That a small committee be appointed along with the Deacons to enquire into the nature and extent of the obligations of this Church towards Blackburn Road Church, and whether it can recommend the present as a fitting time in which to take up those obligations.”

At the Deacons' Meeting on December 30th, 1889, the Secretary was directed to summon the enquiry committee for Thursday, January 16th, 1890, in accordance with the arrangements made at the meeting of the Church and Congregation. The enquiry was to consider the position in which this Church stood to Blackburn Road Church. The committee consisted of the Deacons, and Messrs. Duxbury, Hulme, J. T. Cooper, H. Haywood, D. Ottewill, F. Cooper, and F. Isherwood. In the meantime the Church there declaring themselves Independent, the committee were again ordered to be summoned on March 25th, 1890, and the matter finally settled.

Towards the end of 1891, the Bolton School Board built a School of their own in this neighbourhood, and as a consequence, had no further need of Blackbank Street School as a Day School. The giving up of their tenancy meant a serious loss to Blackburn Road Church at this time—it being already hardly pressed. Therefore, in a most honourable and unselfish spirit, Mr. Lambert stood aside, feeling it his duty to tender his resignation as Pastor, and thus allowed the Church to face its new conditions unfettered by any personal considerations. Thus, after some seven years of unostentatious but very sound and useful work in the promotion of the Master's Kingdom, Mr. Lambert, to the general regret of his people, resigned the Pastorate, in order to take up fresh service in Ormskirk.

This resignation was in November, 1891, and was to take effect at the end of the year. Mr. Lambert felt that the struggle would be too great both for himself and for his people to continue without external help, and not feeling sufficiently encouraged in his work, preferred to resign, and thus leave the Church free to make other arrangements.

Failing health soon compelled Mr. Lambert to resign at Ormskirk, and reside with his daughter at Kensington, Liverpool, where he died in February, 1905.

With his ever-ready sympathy, Mr. Wolstenholme sent a letter on September 28th, 1892, to Mr. Ashton, Secretary of Blackburn Road Church, and this is so characteristic of the man that we are constrained to copy it :—

“ And now I want you to convey to your brother Deacons and members the expression of my friendly sympathy with you in your pastorless condition, and in this expression, I may say, all my Deacons join.

" We do not know what may be your aims and desires under the circumstances, but if you think we can be of any assistance to you, we shall be very willing to render it. At any rate, we shall be glad to learn that you are keeping together, and prosecuting your work in peace and harmony. We do not wish in anywise to intrude upon the affairs of an independent Church, but desire to send you a brotherly word of greeting and sympathy, and an assurance of Christian interest in your work, and readiness to help, if you think we can render it.

" Praying that the great Head of the Church may ever guide and bless you,

" I am,

" For myself and Deacons,

" Yours very faithfully,

" J. R. WOLSTENHOLME."

This letter was also read by Mr. Ashton at Mr. Burrows' Recognition Services.

A Conference was held on December 8th, 1892, under the presidency of the Rev. J. R. Wolstenholme, with Messrs. B. Cole, H. S. Sturges, and W. Steele representing this Church, and Messrs. Isherwood, Ashton, and Colin Cooper as representatives of Blackburn Road Church. After conversation it was arranged that the friends at Blackburn Road nominate five persons to act with five from St. George's Road to form a consultative committee as to the Pastorate and prospective building of the New Church.

Matters went on slowly until the summer of 1893 before any attempt was made to fill the vacancy caused by Mr. Lambert's resignation, and during this time the Church looked again to Lancashire College for its supply of ministers.

In July of that year, Mr. T. L. Burrows came as a supply ; two months later, without again asking him to preach, a unanimous and very hearty invitation was given to him to become the Pastor of the Church.

After prayerful consideration, and having taken the counsel of his friends, Mr. Burrows decided to accept this invitation, though he had still a year to remain in College.

Several visits were paid by him to the Church of which he was to become the Minister, and it fell to his lot to have the honour of preaching the last sermon in the Iron Church.

Twelve months after his first visit to Blackburn Road, Mr. Burrows commenced his ministry, the date being July 1st, 1894.

CHAPTER LIV.

A CATHEDRAL OF NONCONFORMITY.

Offer to Build—Memorial Stone Laying—Presentation of Illuminated Address—Description of Church—Opening Ceremonies—Mr. Burrows' Sermon—Scholars' Service—Evening Service—Visit of Doctor Watson—Success of the Services.

It became known among the officials and others some little time before the invitation was given to Mr. Langford Burrows, that Mr. James Lever was prepared to give a large donation towards the erection of a more substantial building than the Iron Church in which the services were at that time being carried on.

Working as the people were at this time under such circumstances of difficulty, the intimation was a joyful one. Better news, however, followed. In order to carry out the desire of their father, and his son-in-law, Mr. W. F. Tillotson, the sons of Mr. Lever, Mr. W. H. Lever and Mr. J. D. Lever, stated that they were about to build a Church entirely at their own expense. This they did, and the building they erected has aptly been dubbed "A Cathedral of Nonconformity."

Mr. James Lever was at that time the oldest living member of St. George's Road Church, and the Church forms a most fitting memorial of the great interest which he ever evinced for Congregationalism in Bolton during the whole of his lifetime.

The plans prepared by Mr. J. Simpson, architect, revealed the munificence of the gift, and when the building was completed, its ample proportions, the good stand it occupies, and its character, amply deserves all the highest encomiums that can be given for it.

On May 25th, 1895, the Memorial Stone was laid by Mr. James Lever, the father of the donors, and those whose privilege it was to be present at this ceremony will never forget the occurrence. The site of the proposed Church was filled with people who were anxious to witness this interesting ceremony. The platform around the stone was occupied by the Nonconformist Clergy of the District, and by many of the leading

men of our town. In front of the stone were massed the children of the Sunday School, whilst behind them stood the members of the Church, and in spite of the inclemency of the weather, every available vantage ground was occupied. After a hymn had been sung, the Rev. Dr. Johnstone read a portion of Scripture, and the Rev. J. D. Thomas engaged in prayer.

In the course of his address, the Pastor, the Rev. T. Langford Burrows, expressed the deep sense of thankfulness which he and his people felt towards God for all his goodness, and his tender mercies, in years that were past, and especially for his loving kindness in bringing them to that joyous day. At the close of the Pastor's address, the architect, Mr. J. Simpson, presented Mr. Lever with a richly-engraved trowel, and Mr. Wood, on behalf of the contractors (Messrs. Wood & Son), presented Mr. Lever with a mallet. As the huge stone was swung into position, Mr. James Lever advanced amidst great cheering, and soon announced that it was "well and truly laid."

Tea was afterwards served in the schoolroom, and the Rev. T. Langford Burrows presided over the after meeting, the largest ever known in the history of the Church. He was supported on the platform by Mr. James Lever, Mr. J. D. Lever, Mr. J. L. Tillotson, and the Rev. George Barber, who was at that time the newly appointed minister at St. George's Road Church, and also his Deacons. The most interesting feature of this meeting was the presentation of an illuminated address on behalf of the Church, by Mr. Colin Cooper, to Mr. Lever.

On rising to reply Mr. Lever received a tremendous ovation, and in the course of his address expressed the hope that the Gospel, and the Gospel only, would be proclaimed and faithfully preached in the Church, which in the Providence of God his sons were erecting.

The following is a description of the Church and Pastor's house, which occupy a commanding position on Blackburn Road. The site extends from Hibbert Street to Draycott Street, and has a frontage to Blackburn Road of 164 feet, and a depth of 90 feet, and contains an area of 1,634 square yards. The tower is placed at the angle of Draycott Street and Blackburn Road, the house being placed at the Hibbert Street end

of the site. In general arrangement the Church follows the usual cruciform plan of clerestoried nave, aisles, and transepts, the choir being placed in an elevated chancel, on the east side of which is a lofty organ chamber, and on the west side a minister's vestry with large parish room adjoining and communicating ; the two latter are adjacent to the Pastor's house, and form an exceptionally attractive feature of the design. There are four entrances, three being on Blackburn Road, and one in Draycott Street. The Style of the architecture adopted is that of late perpendicular Gothic of the sixteenth century, which was considered the most suitable. The whole of the buildings were erected in stone from the Runcorn quarries, the interior of the Church being built in ashlar work. The octagonal pillars supporting the arcades are a special feature, being elaborately carved, as are also other prominent features in the building.

The general dimensions of the Church, which will accommodate 600 people, are as follows :—Nave, 85 feet long, with a width of 28 feet, the total width of the Church being 59 feet. The chancel, apsidal in plan, is 30 feet long and 24 feet wide, has a handsome black and white marble pavement, and on the oak wainscoting round the chancel are inscribed the words : “Behold the Lamb of God.” A large communion table is fixed in the chancel, the pulpit being at one side, having a stone base, and the choir stalls are on each side of the chancel. The tower and spire, forming as they do such a prominent feature, rise to a height of 144 feet. The spire is richly broached by pinnacles. There is an effective belfry with traceried windows on each side, provision being made beneath for clock faces on three sides. The lower portion of the tower forms the principal entrance to the Church, and has a richly-moulded and carved doorway, and traceried windows being used throughout the edifice, form another special feature of it.

The interior of the building is imposingly beautiful, not so much from brilliant stained-glass windows, but for the general air of massive solidity and chaste decoration, especially in the carvings.

The new and handsome Church was nearing completion when Mr. James Lever passed to his rest, and was opened on

BLACKBURN ROAD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.



Sunday June 6th, 1897, for divine worship, in the presence of a crowded congregation, hundreds having to be turned away. This event will make the year 1897 to stand out in the annals of this Church as a memorable one for all time. Previous to the services, Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Lever attended in the schoolroom, along with Mr. J. Ferguson, the Rev. Charles and Mrs. Burrows, the Rev. T. Langford Burrows, Pastor, the Trustees, Deacons and others. Having proceeded in procession to the Draycott Street entrance to the Church, the Pastor presented Mr. Lever with a silver key as a small token of their gratitude, esteem, and regard, and asked him to kindly declare the Church open.

Mr. Lever, having accepted the key, said there was only one regret, and that was that his father had not been spared to see that happy day, for he felt he could only very inadequately fill his father's place. He hoped the Church would be a centre of good in the neighbourhood. He thought they were fortunate in the choice of their minister, and he hoped God's blessing would rest upon all their efforts. He had pleasure in declaring the Church open for the worship of Almighty God according to the principles of their faith and order. The Church then rapidly filled.

The Rev. Charles Burrows, of Workington, father of the Pastor, conducted the service and offered the dedicatory prayer, the lessons being read by his son. The Pastor, the Rev. T. L. Burrows, then ascended the pulpit and preached from the words, *Isaiah vi., 1-8*, which records the vision of the prophet in the temple. In the course of his sermon the preacher said that Church testified to the piety of one who saw no longer through a glass darkly, but face to face. That Church, built by loving sons, was his enduring cenotaph. When that little Church worshipping there had well-nigh gone out, God raised up their friend and father in God, and the day star of hope shone again. A new era had dawned. For twenty years and more the people who had worshipped on that site had worked amidst great discouragement. A member of the Wesleyan community had said to him :—

“ My heart has fairly ached for the people of Blackburn Road time and time again, nothing that they did seemed to prosper.”

But there were always a few who never let go, and heart-aches were now over, tears were in their eyes, but they were tears of gladness, and not of sorrow, those days were past. They had now an opportunity of doing God service, and he had faith to believe they were the men to do it. Everything was in their favour. That Church, so beautiful in its simplicity, would be an enduring attraction of itself, and he was sure its very atmosphere inspired devotion. He wanted to feel sure that the working men, for whom especially that Church had been built, would come in their hundreds to worship there and to join in a service which he promised them, as long as he remained minister of that people, should ever be marked with brotherly feeling and tender sympathy and Christian love.

The church they dedicated to God that day was a monument of paternal excellence and piety, an honour to a father and loving sons. In the memory of him to whose wish they were indebted for that church, and in memory of those who had carried out a father's deep desire, and who had remembered the first commandment with promise, that church should be handed down from minister to minister, from generation to generation, from age to age, and from children to children, as they came within those hallowed walls from sabbath to sabbath, and they would lift up their voices as they did that day, for him, who like David had purposed in his heart to build for them, and for them, who like David's son, had reared that church.

The hymns at the service were appropriate to the occasion, the first hymn being "O God of Bethel, by whose hand." The anthem was "Seek ye the Lord," the solo being tastefully given by Mr. A. E. Holt. The musical portion of the service was conducted by Mr. C. E. Smethurst, choirmaster, and Mr. Jos. Smethurst presided at the harmonium.

In the afternoon a scholars' service was held. Mr. Colin Cooper presided, and stated that he was the only remaining official who came from St. George's Road to that Mission 25 years ago.

Mr. W. H. Lever, who was present, referred to his early connection with Duke's Alley and his subsequent connection with the Congregational Church, St. George's Road, and said he could not stand and hear all the credit for building that

church given to himself. His brother and himself only did what their father had a very great desire to do, and he wanted them to feel that they owed that church to his father and to the late Mr. W. F. Tillotson. He always connected Mr. Tillotson in his mind with that edifice, and to them must be given the credit. He also paid a tribute to the early workers 25 years ago, who had borne the heat and burden of the day, and though they seemed to be frustrated, they rejoiced that everything had gone on so well.

Mr. Lever, after complimenting the architect Mr. J. Simpson, and the contractors on the result of their work, delivered an interesting address to the children, telling them their motto should be "Whatsoever thine hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." He concluded by wishing a long and prosperous sphere to all.

Addresses were given by Mr. F. Cooper, one of the superintendents of St. George's Road Sunday School, and Mr. W. Steele, superintendent of the Blackburn Road Sunday School.

In the evening, Dr. Scott, principal of Lancashire Independent College, preached, and a Communion Service was afterwards held, when over 50 new members were received into fellowship with the Church, almost all of whom were scholars in the Sunday School. At this service the Rev. Charles Burrows, of Workington, presided, and delivered an eloquent and inspiring address. During the day the substantiality, beauty, lightness, and superior acoustic qualities were much admired. The collections amounted to £59 15s. 2d.

The opening services of this church were continued on the Wednesday evening following, when the edifice was filled by a representative congregation to hear the Rev. Dr. Watson (" Ian Maclaren "), of Liverpool. He was assisted in the service by the Rev. T. L. Burrows, the pastor. Taking for his subject the family institution, Dr. Watson maintained that the family was the foundation of both Church and State. The family was a divine institution, and any declension of it must be fought against, for without the family there would be anarchy in the State and the Church. He eloquently traced how the family revealed the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, and created unselfishness and love by which the love of God could be interpreted. He then

pathetically and forcibly pleaded with young men and women to honour their parents and cherish home life. The discourse, which was delivered extempore, had in it many of those exquisite passages with which the admirers of the rev. doctor are familiar, and was listened to with sustained attention. A collection amounting to £14 16s. 1½d. was made on behalf of the New School Fund.

The workers at Blackburn Road had every reason to rejoice at the success of the opening services in June, 1897. Over 300 sittings were taken in the new church, and a great increase of worshippers was reported.

CHAPTER LV. MERIT RECOGNISED.

Presentations to Mr. and Mrs. Colin Cooper and Mrs. Gregson—Mrs. Fyles—Mr. and Mrs. Burrows—Bazaar Results—Mr. W. Steele—Memorial Windows.

Members of the classes of Mr. and Mrs. Colin Cooper, with a few friends, held a tea party on Saturday, October 8th, 1898. After tea the pastor took the chair, and he and Mr. W. Steele gave addresses. Mr. Isherwood next made a presentation to Mr. and Mrs. Colin Cooper, which consisted of a beautiful clock, stating that they had won the esteem of all their scholars. Mrs. Mather supported, as representing Mrs. Cooper's class.

The pastor and Mr. Steele having borne testimony to the services of the two recipients, Mr. Cooper replied, observing that he and his wife were always willing to do their utmost for the church and school.

Early in December, 1898, at the invitation of Mrs. Gregson, her past and present scholars partook of a capital tea together. Afterwards, Miss Beedles, on behalf of the scholars, presented their teacher with a beautiful Teacher's Bible, stating that it was a token of the esteem in which she was held by her class, for the faithful and diligent manner in which she had laboured amongst them.

Mrs. Gregson responded in a few grateful words, acknowledging that the present came quite unexpectedly, but was no less the occasion of deep gladness to her. The evening finished in a social manner.

On Saturday, December 18th, 1898, the members of Mrs. Fyle's class invited her and Mr. Fyles to tea, when Miss Snape, on behalf of the class, presented Mrs. Fyles with a beautiful silver cruet, stating that the gift sprang from love responsive to the kindness shown them by their teacher. Mrs. Fyles suitably acknowledged the present, and owned to the pleasure she would derive from its possession. Another presentation was made to the pastor, the Rev. T. L. Burrows and his wife, when they returned from their honeymoon in June, 1898. There was a large assembly, over which Mr. J. Harper presided, and on behalf of all connected with the school and church, the chairman extended a very warm welcome to Mr. and Mrs. Burrows. Mr. W. Steele appropriately moved the following resolution :—

“ That as a Church and people we offer you our sincere and hearty congratulations upon your marriage. We pray that God's choicest blessings may rest upon you and your wife. We extend to Mrs. Burrows a very cordial welcome, and would assure her that as every heart has been opened to receive you, the same loving sympathy will be shown towards her. We trust that she may feel that she has come among a people whom to know will be to love. Our prayers are that she may be divinely inspired to be your helpmeet in all holy things, so that the work of extension in the Master's vineyard may receive a stimulus by her presence and help. We welcome you both under these auspicious circumstances, and trust that now you are married and able to settle down in a home of your own, the zeal which in the past has been so manifest and abundant in the work committed to your charge, may be enriched by your new surroundings, and that many years of happy, useful, and fruitful labour in our midst may be granted unto you.”

Mr. Horrocks suitably seconded the resolution, which was most cordially adopted.

Mr. D. Cooper then, on behalf of the congregation, presented to Mr. Burrows a silver tea and coffee service and an escritoire and chair, while Mr. Broughton, representing the cricket club, of which the pastor was president and playing member, formally handed to him a handsome marble time-piece, which, like the other gifts, was neatly inscribed. It was explained that every family in the congregation had subscribed for the presents. Mr. Burrows feelingly acknowledged

the gifts on behalf of himself and his wife, and referred with gratitude to the continuous kindness he had met with from the people of that Church, ever since the happy day when he first came to labour among them.

At the end of 1898 a three days' bazaar, which was opened by Mr. W. H. Lever, resulted in £309 being realised. This was made up to £360 later. The objects of this were to provide a contribution for the Council Extension Fund, to raise a sum of money to meet special church expenditure, and a further sum towards a Ground Rent Fund. Mr. Colin Cooper pointed out that £9 a week was needed to enable ordinary expenses to be met conveniently. Mr. Charles E. Smethurst, the respected leader of the choir, resigned at this time, and Mr. Mitchell was appointed as his successor. For three years Mr. Smethurst rendered valuable and efficient services here.

An interesting meeting was held in the schoolroom in March, 1899, when the officers and teachers presented to Mr. Wm. Steele, one of the superintendents, a handsome silver table lamp, together with a copy of Dr. Clarke's "Outlines of Christian Theology," as a token of their esteem. The presentation was made by the co-superintendent, Mr. Colin Cooper, who bore testimony to the high regard in which Mr. Steele was held.

Mrs. Dagnall and Mr. Grundy, two of the oldest teachers, also spoke, special mention being made of the great services rendered by Mr. Steele as teacher of the preparation class during the last 15 years. Mr. Steele suitably responded.

On December 26th, 1899, the Rev. T. L. Burrows informed the Deacons that a brass tablet was to be placed in the church with the stained-glass windows, and on this was inscribed :—

"The west window was erected by the Members of this Congregation to the memory of James Lever, Esq., of Bolton, as a tribute to his work in connection with Congregationalism in this district, and as a tribute to his long and useful life, high character, and sterling worth.

"Born at Bolton, 26th August, 1809. Died at Thornton Hough, Cheshire, 26th May, 1897."

The design of the window is characteristic of the subject portrayed, "Christ blessing little children," and is of a perpendicular character, consisting of five lights, with tracery above. The main subject is carried across the whole of the

five lights, the space occupied by the figure subject taking the form of an arch. The centre light of all is the richest in colour, while towards either side the colouring becomes quieter in tone. Our Lord is depicted as seated in the midst of His Disciples, who stand around in a semi-circular group, while before Him, in various appealing attitudes are the mothers with babes and children. These form the foreground group. Our Lord is shown with a child upon his knee looking down and blessing the children around, while he utters the words, "Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven."

The glass used throughout is of the finest and what is known as English Antique. This was unveiled by Mr. W. H. Lever, on March 31st, 1900, and Mr. B. Cole, who had known the late Mr. Lever, spoke of his work in connection with Congregationalism in the town and district.

Presiding afterwards over an entertainment in the school, Mr. Lever expressed his great thanks for the beautiful window he had unveiled, and said it would be another bond of union between him and the church.

CHAPTER LVI.

NEW SCHOOL ERECTED.

Offer to Build—Memorial Stone Laid—Mr. Colin Cooper—Memorial to Norman—Power to Sell Old School Sought—New School Opened.

A new school having become an imperative necessity, the negotiations relating to this began at the Deacons' meeting on January 30th, 1900, when the chairman read a letter from W. H. Lever, Esq., respecting the proposed new schools, stating that he would build the large hall and one wing, and would also purchase the land for the whole of the new schools. The matter was placed in order on February 2nd, 1900, by the following resolutions :—

"That this meeting heartily accepts the generous offer of W. H. Lever, Esq., to build for us the new Schools, and also to buy the ground for the Schools to stand on."

This resolution being moved by Mr. R. Ashton, and seconded by Mr. J. Horrocks. A further resolution:

"That we as a Church and School pledge ourselves to build one wing of the proposed new Schools,"

was moved by Mr. J. Waring and seconded by Mr. J. S. Isherwood. Another one:

"That a building committee be appointed to carry the matter out,"

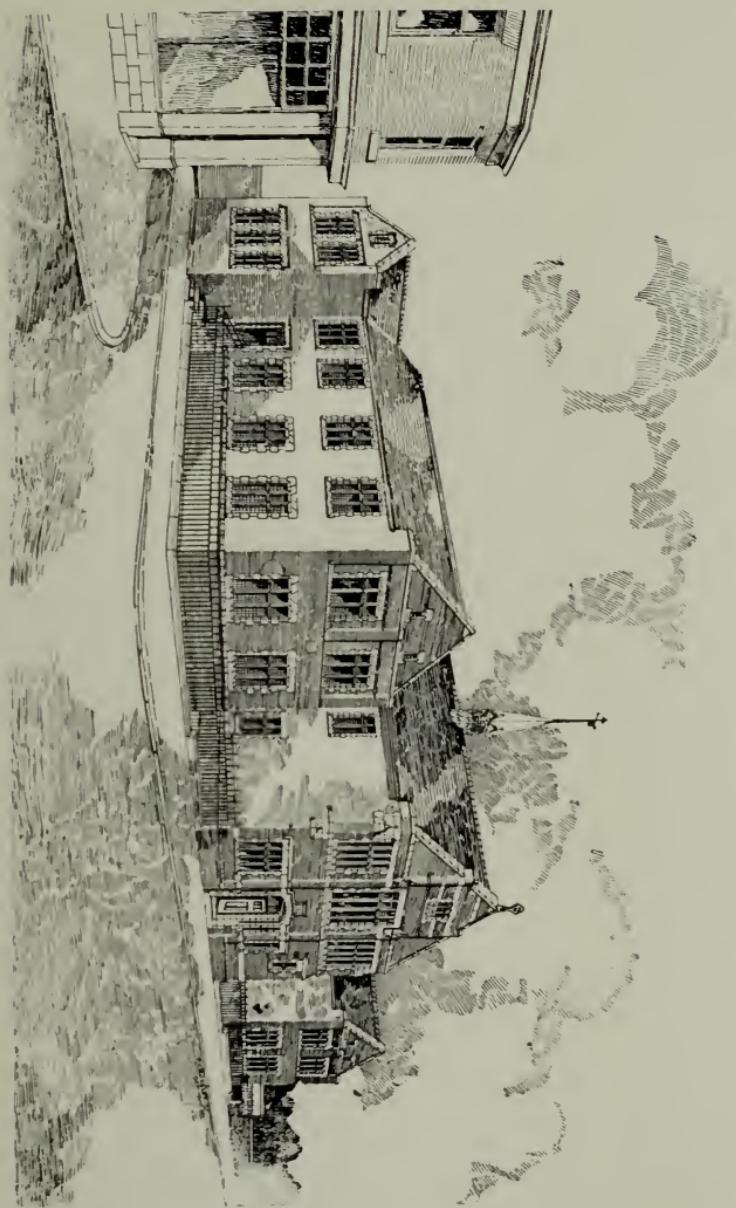
was also passed.

The memorial stone of the new school was laid on Saturday, September 1st, 1900, by Master W. Hulme Lever, the son of Mr. Lever. A procession preceded the stone-laying ceremony, and afterwards a festival of sacred song was rendered by the choir and scholars of Port Sunlight Schools.

These schools occupy a commanding position on Blackburn Road, at the junction of Draycott Street, having a frontage to Blackburn Road of 138-ft. and a depth of 81-ft., and consist of a large central hall with two wings joined to the main building by spacious corridors. The hall is 64-ft. 6-in. long by 40-ft. wide and 34-ft. high, with gallery on three sides, and will provide seating accommodation for about 600 people. The principal entrance is from Blackburn Road, but access can also be obtained from each of the wings, and three staircases communicate with the gallery. The wings are each two storeys high, and contain the class-rooms, 29 in number, and also on the ground floor an Infants' room, 34-ft. long by 20-ft. wide with separate entrance from Draycott Street, secretary's room, kitchen, and cloak-rooms, lavatories, etc., and in the north wing on the first floor a small assembly room is provided, 46-ft. long by 20-ft. wide. The schools were designed to harmonise with the church on the other side of the road, in the late Gothic style.

The name of Mr. Colin Cooper will be associated with Blackburn Road School and Church for all time. His services for so many years as a Deacon, as Teacher of the men's class, and as Superintendent of the school, assure that, even if he had not endeared himself in so many other ways to the people here also.

Through Mr. Cooper's good judgment and foresight, Blackburn Road School was one of the first schools in England to



BLACKBURN ROAD CONGREGATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL.

adopt the grading system. Claremont Baptist was the first in Bolton, and Blackburn Road the second. The story of the gradual adoption of this system in this school is really a very wonderful story, and redounds very greatly to Mr. Cooper's credit. He has won by his own personal enthusiasm, the hearty loyalty of a large staff of teachers, of superintendents in the Kindergarten, Primary and Junior Schools, the monitors who work under them, the teachers in the main school, and the workers in the men's class. The secret of his success is his whole-hearted devotion to the Sunday School cause. He brings to bear on the work of the Sunday the same trained business acumen that he employs all the week. Latterly he has had a faithful lieutenant in the superintendency of the school in Mr. George Pye.

On May 23rd, 1901, Norman Edward, the beloved adopted son of Colin and Mrs. Cooper, passed away at the early age of 9 years, the bright little fellow being regretted by all who knew or came in contact with him.

At the Deacons' meeting on June 18th, 1901, a letter was read from Mr. Colin Cooper, who therein stated :—

“ That they were wishful to have some memorial of his son Norman's connection with the Schools, and to make an acknowledgment of the sympathy and love which had been shown to his memory. Mr. Cooper had therefore decided to ask the Deacons to accept a piano, on which, if accepted, they proposed to fix a brass plate with a suitable inscription to Norman's memory.”

The following resolution in connection with this was passed unanimously.

“ That the Diaconate consider Mr. Cooper's suggestion a happy one, and they have great pleasure in assenting to the proposed Memorial, which they consider most suitable in every way. They desire also to thank Mr. and Mrs. Cooper most heartily.”

At a meeting of the church and congregation on July 3rd, 1902, on the motion of Mr. C. Cooper, seconded by the Rev. T. Langford Burrows, it was resolved that an application should be made to the Charity Commissioners for power to sell the school buildings in Blackbank Street, and that an application be made for the proceeds of the sale of the old schools.

The new schools which were erected almost immediately opposite the new church, and which were intended to replace

the old school in Blackbank Street, were opened by Mrs. W. H. Lever, on February 19th, 1902. Previous to the opening ceremony, an organ recital by Mr. J. Smethurst, organist, took place in the church, as a preliminary to the function at the school. A procession was then formed. The ceremony outside the schools was a brief one.

The Rev. T. Langford Burrows asked Mr. Colin Cooper, as Sunday School Superintendent, to present Mrs. W. H. Lever with a gold key with which to open the door of the schools. Mrs. Lever, accepting the key, said :—

“ Mr. Lever and I are very glad to be with you to-day to complete the work that our boy commenced, although I should have preferred that he had been here to complete it himself. There is no cause that so strongly appeals to us as the training of young children, and our greatest pleasure is in seeing them well cared for and happy. I have therefore much pleasure in declaring these Schools open, and wish them every success and prosperity in the future.”

The door was then opened, and the visitors flocked into the schools. The first object that met their gaze was a bust of the late Mr. James Lever, whose connection with Bolton Congregationalism will ever be a grateful memory.

Following upon the opening ceremony in connection with the schools, a bazaar in aid of the building fund was opened by His Worship the Mayor (Alderman Miles, J.P.). The chair was occupied by Councillor J. W. Scott, J.P., and there was a large attendance, including those present at the opening of the schools. After devotional exercises, the Rev. T. Langford Burrows explained the object of the bazaar. Ever since he had been amongst them they had been crowded for room in the school. They had class-rooms put first in one corner, and then in another, until there came a time when there were no more corners to utilise, and they made up their minds to build. Just at that time Mr. Lever asked them what they thought of giving for a building, and they replied that they thought they could manage to raise £2,000. Mr. Lever said, “ All right, go on with your £2,000, and leave the rest to me.” They very willingly did leave the rest to him, and were very proud that they did so. To some congregations £2,000 might not seem much, but to their congregation, which was largely of a working-class character, it was a serious item. If, however, they were not a wealthy church, he thought they had shown

they were a willing church. Twelve months ago the superintendent said they would go into the new school with 50 teachers and officers and 500 scholars. It seemed too much to hope for, but he was pleased to say it had been accomplished. He then introduced the Mayor, who was well received, and who declared the bazaar open in a few well-chosen words.

Mr. Lever proposed a vote of thanks to the Mayor, and Mr. Snelson seconded the resolution, which was heartily adopted.

On the motion of Mr. William Lander, seconded by Mr. Ashton, a vote of thanks was passed to Mr. and Mrs. Lever in a very hearty manner.

CHAPTER LVII.

CHANGING PASTORS.

Mr. Burrows Called to Thornton Hough—Presentation of Address—The Rev. W. J. Collier Called—Start of His Ministry Here—His Career—Meeting of Welcome—Work Already Done.

At a meeting of the Church and Congregation in the school lecture hall on November 16th, 1903, with Mr. Colin Cooper in the chair, and supported by the deacons, the chairman explained to the meeting that they had been called together for the purpose of considering the position with regard to the call which the Rev. T. Langford Burrows had received from Thornton Hough Congregational Church. He had pleasure in calling upon Mr. Haydock to move a resolution which the Deacons had framed. The church secretary then moved the following resolution :—

“ That this meeting having heard that our Minister has received a call from Thornton Hough, desires to place on record, and express to him, its deep and heartfelt appreciation of the manifold services rendered by him to this Church during the past 9½ years; and also to express the fervent hope that unless prevented by imperative health considerations, he will continue to remain our minister.

“ Further we hereby pledge ourselves to cheerfully render to him all loyal support and service in the future, as in the past, if he should be led by Almighty God to decide to stay amongst us.”

Mr. R. Burrows seconded, and the resolutions were carried unanimously.

Mr. Burrows accepted the call to Thornton Hough and a further meeting was called on February 10th, 1904, for the purpose of taking into consideration the making of a presentation to the retiring minister, in recognition of his services amongst them, and the chairman stated that the Deacons recommended to the meeting that the testimonial should take the form of an illuminated address. This recommendation from the Diaconate was unanimously accepted.

There was a large gathering of church members in the large school on Saturday, March 24th, 1904, to bid farewell to the Rev. and Mrs. Burrows. After tea Mr. Colin Cooper presided, and referred in terms of high appreciation of the faithful work of the minister in the church and school,

Mr. J. N. Mundy spoke on behalf of the young men, and expressed their gratitude for all that Mr. Burrows had done.

Mr. D. Cooper, on behalf of the church, voiced the hearty thanks of the members and their goodwill.

An address was then presented to Mr. Burrows by Mr. R. Ashton.

The minister in replying, thanked the congregation for their kindness to him during the years he had been with them. They had been a happy family, and had worked together with the greatest harmony.

The children, as a token of their affection, gave Mr. Burrows two pieces of Doulton Ware, the young men an oil painting of the church and school, and the ladies of the sewing meeting presented Mrs. Burrows with silver flower vases and bon-bon dish.

The address was bound in Russian leather, and testifies to the fidelity of Mr. Burrows to his work, his school teaching, Scripture examinations, Band of Hope enthusiasm, and C.E. organisation. Reference is also made to his interest in the recreation and mutual improvement societies, and, further, speaks in warm praise of Mrs. Burrows.

At the special meeting of church members, which was held in the Lecture Hall on August 15th, 1904, with Mr. Colin Cooper presiding, the chairman explained to the meeting that they had been called together to take into consideration the pastorate of the church, and in the name of the Deacons to recommend to them the Rev. W. J. Collier, M.A., of Edinburgh.

The chairman then proceeded to give a sketch of Mr. Collier's career, touching upon the rev. gentleman's parentage, college life, his six years of good and useful work at Huntly, and then his work at his present church, including in this the lady to whom Mr. Collier was engaged.

Continuing, the chairman stated that the reports and information the Deacons had received regarding Mr. Collier and also the future Mrs. Collier, were extremely good, in fact all that could be desired. He had pleasure, therefore, in the name of the Deacons, in placing before that meeting the name of Mr. Collier as being the most suitable man to become the pastor of the Church.

Mr. E. Sewell then moved and Mr. Wagstaff seconded,

"That a call be sent to the Rev. W. J. Collier, M.A., of Edinburgh, inviting him to become Pastor of our Church."

On this resolution being put to the meeting the same was carried unanimously.

At a further special meeting of the Church and Congregation on August 16th, 1904, this was confirmed on the motion of Mr. R. Ashton, seconded by Mr. J. S. Isherwood, and carried unanimously.

The matter was finally settled at the Deacons' meeting on August 18th, 1904, and the call forwarded. This was signed by G. S. Haddock, as secretary, and the whole of the Deacons.

Mr. Collier was asked to commence his duties on Sunday October 9th, 1904, and agreed to do so.

The Rev. W. J. Collier, M.A. (Edin.), was born in New Maud, Aberdeenshire, in 1871. He was educated at the Nairn Academy, and Edinburgh University, where he attained considerable academic distinction, graduating with honours in 1894. His theological training was received at the Edinburgh Theological Hall, 1894-1896. He was minister at Huntly, Aberdeenshire, from 1896 to 1902, at Hope Park, Edinburgh from 1902 to 1904, and is now the esteemed minister of Blackburn Road Congregational Church.

"Welcome!" This word, emblazoned on the walls of Blackburn Road Congregational Schoolroom, was the keynote of the meeting which was held there on Saturday evening, October 29th, 1904, for the purpose of formally recognising

the Rev. W. J. Collier, M.A., as minister, in succession to the Rev. T. L. Burrows. The schoolroom was crowded, and the meeting was of a very hearty character. Mr. Lever, who was accompanied by Mrs. Lever, presided, and many ministers were also present, including the newly-appointed Rev. G. Barber, and Revs. W. Hope Davison, E. Jessop, J. D. Thomas, J. Shuker, W. Robinson, J. E. Whittaker, F. W. Lloyd Jones, T. L. Burrows and J. F. Munroe, Principal Hodgson, D.D., Prof. G. Currie Martin, and the officers of the Church also occupied seats on the platform.

The meeting opened with the singing of a hymn, followed by a reading of the Scriptures by the Rev. F. W. Lloyd Jones, and prayer by the Rev. W. Robinson.

The chairman welcomed the Rev. W. J. Collier, and said the congregation would give him all the help they could. In Bolton they had been strong in Nonconformity for a long time. He did not know that there was ever a time when a man could do as much good as now, and Mr. Collier would find there was a great deal of work to be done in Bolton. They extended a hearty welcome to the new minister.

Mr. G. S. Haddock read the secretarial statement, and the Rev. F. W. Lloyd Jones read a resolution passed at the Congregational Council meeting, congratulating the church on the settlement of its new pastor, and trusting that it might enjoy a continuation of the prosperity it had experienced under the efficient ministry of the former pastor.

Mr. Winward, the President of the Bolton and District Congregational Council, officially welcomed Mr. Collier to his great opportunities for work.

Prof. Martin remarked that Mr. Collier was the sort of man to lead them if they would let him, but he could not make the place a success by himself, and he would need the congregation's help and sympathy, and their constant and earnest prayer.

The Rev. T. L. Burrows, the Rev. G. Barber, and the Rev. W. Hope Davison also spoke words of welcome, and Principal Hodgson read a resolution passed by the Congregational Council of Edinburgh, in which the Scottish ministers spoke with gratitude and appreciation of Mr. Collier's work, and specially referred to his efforts as the auxiliary secretary of the London Missionary Society.

Mr. C. Cooper, as the representative of the Deacons and also as superintendent of the Sunday School, warmly welcomed the new pastor, and said they would help him in his work in every possible way.

Cheers greeted Mr. Collier when he rose to give his first address as the recognised minister of the Church, and thanked all for the cordial greeting and cheerful outlook.

Since Mr. Collier's settlement there have been many removals to other districts, and during the last few years many young men and maidens have left for foreign lands. The evening service is well attended but in common with others we have to deplore the small attendance at the morning service.

The pastor endeavours (along with his deacons) to keep in close touch with every family, and during the sickness of any of his flock he is most attentive in his visitations, and has been a great comfort to the sick and sorrowing.

Mr. Collier is very seldom absent from his own pulpit, and is a most acceptable preacher. His work at Blackburn Road cannot be measured by numbers. He takes a deep interest in the Men's Bible Class of which he is president, and presides most regularly every Sunday afternoon, unless called away to speak at some other place.

Mr. Collier has always taken a deep interest in the London Missionary Society, and is one of the secretaries of the local Auxiliary. In every effort which is put forth in the Church or Sunday School for the furtherance of the cause at Blackburn Road, Mr. Collier takes a most prominent part, and uses every means for good, so that the efforts put forth may be crowned with success.

CHAPTER LVIII.

FREDERICK COOPER MEMORIAL
INSTITUTE.

Gift by Mr. Colin Cooper—Laying the Foundation Stone—Tributes to Mr. Cooper's Memory—Mr. Lever's Speech—Government of Institute—Opening—Memorial Tablet—Evening Meeting—Presentation to Mr. and Mrs. Cooper.

At the Deacons' meeting held on January 27th, 1909, at which Mr. Collier presided, a letter from Mr. Colin Cooper was read, offering to build in memory of his brother, the late Mr. Fred Cooper, a Primary School and Men's Hall. This offer was accepted on the motion of Mr. Collier and seconded by Mr. Ashton.

Matters were put in order, and resulted in a function of great importance to the social side of the work at the Blackburn Road Congregational Church, and which took place on Saturday afternoon, July 31st, 1909, when the foundation stone of a new Institute for social work and play was laid. The institute, which is a memorial to the late Mr. Frederick Cooper, is the gift of his brother, Mr. Colin Cooper, and the stone was laid by Miss Hester Mary Cooper, the youngest niece of the deceased, and daughter of Ald. J. T. Cooper, J.P. Owing to the extreme inclemency of the weather, the outside proceedings had to be reduced to the smallest dimensions, and the service was, as far as possible, taken in Church. After a hymn, prayer was offered by the Rev. Cecil Nicholson, of Little Lever, and the Rev. Maldwyn Johnes, of Derby Street, read a portion of Scripture. The Rev. W. J. Collier, M.A., pastor, made a statement in which he said that the Institute was to belong to the Church, through the open-handed and wise-hearted generosity of one whom he was proud to call friend and fellow-worker—Mr. Colin Cooper, the Sunday School superintendent. In his work Mr. Cooper had entirely fulfilled the Apostolic injunction in that he had first of all given himself and then added his gift. He had crowned, but they hoped not by many years ended, a long period of faithful service for Christ by this noble gift. The building would be for ever associated with the memory of one whom Bolton Congregationalism would not



FREDERICK COOPER MEMORIAL
INSTITUTE.

readily let die. Continually identified with every forward movement that seemed to promise larger usefulness, and a zealous Sunday School worker, it was wholly appropriate that his name should be associated with a building such as the one being erected, and they at Blackburn Road were particularly happy in that through them especially would the memory and inspiration of a truly Christian life be prolonged. The building would mark a new epoch in the life and work of their Church and School, and would confer on them serious added responsibility. At the same time it would give them an enormously enhanced opportunity. It came to them at the exact moment of their need, for their work had reached such a stage when without such accommodation it would have been seriously crippled.

Whatever problems might be raised by the association of institutional work with the churches, he had no hesitation in asserting that the accommodation they had already provided on those lines, inadequate though it had been, had been thoroughly justified. Apart from the moral and religious value of such work, there were in the great industrial towns of Lancashire few needs that were more imperative than the need of opportunities for healthy and happy recreation, and he knew of no institution under whose auspices that recreation could be offered under more healthy conditions than in connection with the Christian Church. When their superintendent contemplated his gift he had in his mind the needs of the little children, for the Primary Department had grown until it had actually burst its borders and overflowed into the Church. This congestion the new building would relieve, and there would be not only more room but more satisfactorily-arranged room. Of this building that would be dedicated to the glory of God and to the furtherance of Christ's Kingdom, and would stand to the memory of a truly devout and thoroughly cultured Christian gentleman, erected by his brother, he would have the pleasure of asking Miss Hester Mary Cooper, the youngest niece of the late Mr. Cooper, to lay the foundation stone.

The congregation then crossed the road to the site of the new building, where, in spite of the rain, a fairly large crowd awaited them.

Miss Cooper, before performing her task, was presented with a silver trowel and a silver-mounted mallet by Mr. Colin Cooper, and she soon declared the stone well and truly laid.

A vote of thanks to her was proposed by Mr. R. Ashton, seconded by Mr. H. S. Atherton, and heartily approved, and her father, responding in her behalf, said the original work of Sunday Schools was the teaching of reading and writing, and that they might say that those institutions in which reasonable recreation was provided, were only a step in the further development of that object. He reminded those who would be connected with the institute that it was not intended that it should take the place of the church, but its work ought to lead to and be part of the larger work of the church itself.

On behalf of the contractors, Messrs. Pollitt and Co., and Messrs. Gregsons and Smith, Mr. W. E. Houghton handed to Miss Cooper something which he said would be appreciated by her now, whilst she would be some years before she appreciated the full value of the trowel and mallet. It was a large doll, beautifully dressed.

Tea was afterwards served in the schoolroom.

In the evening a public meeting was held in the schoolroom, the Rev. W. J. Collier, M.A., presiding over a large company. There were on the platform with him the Revs. G. Barber, F. W. Lloyd Jones, W. Hope Davison, M.A., and Messrs. W. H. Lever, M.P., Joseph Boyle, J.P., J. Kershaw, J. Mundy, W. M. Balshaw, and Harry Gregson.

After the opening devotions the Chairman said he was proud as minister of that Church, that as long as the Church stood and did its work, the name of one so deservedly honoured in Bolton Congregationalism as Mr. Frederick Cooper, would have his memory associated with them. He was glad the memorial took the form that it did, for the more experience he had in institutional work the more certain he was of it. The Church had a direct duty in providing such facilities and opportunities for young men and women as that institute would provide.

Mr. Joseph Boyle, paying his tribute to the work of Mr. Cooper, said he could, without hesitation, speak of him as one of the best men he ever knew. What they owed to him they could not well estimate, and to very few men was it

given to gain the confidence and goodwill of the men amongst whom he moved, as was the case with Mr. Cooper. An almost unique tribute, was the one paid by a number of men in Bolton who had had business with him, in sending a contribution to the Queen Street Mission as a memorial to him. No wonder they should wish to perpetuate the memory and character of such a man, and if they would try to copy his example and emulate his spirit, his influence would still be felt.

The Rev. G. Barber, speaking as minister of St. George's Road Church, with which the late Mr. Cooper was associated for many years, and in connection with which he really did his great life work, said he was sure Mr. Cooper would wish him on an occasion like that to emphasise the reality of the Gospel. He had nothing to say against the institutional church, and so long as the emphasis was on the church, and not on the institution, it would be a good thing. They had to be careful in these days, however, that the first things were still put first, and that man's deepest and most vital needs for time and eternity were not neglected nor forsaken. All through his life Mr. Cooper always did put first things first.

Mr. Lever said he was there to show his respect, his high esteem and regard, for the late Mr. Cooper. He did not know Mr. Cooper well, but his father knew him, and he knew from what he had heard his father say of him, that no man stood higher in Congregationalism and service in Bolton than Mr. Cooper did. If Mr. Cooper could have been consulted as to what form the memorial should take, he would have, he (Mr. Lever) thought, selected the very form that had been adopted. The Institute was to be both educational—an adjunct to the Church and Sunday School on Sundays—and on week-days it was going to give reasonable and proper recreation to young men and women for the cultivation of their bodies. Mr. Cooper would have desired such a well-balanced proportion. Only on such lines would any human being attain to what was or should be the object of each—to be supremely happy themselves, and to make others happy. Both Mr. Cooper's brothers were strenuously and whole-heartedly carrying on the work he did, and for his memory to live in them was to the great advantage of their fellowmen, and showed the undying influence one man could have.

The Rev. W. Hope Davison said Mr. Cooper, along with Mr. Joseph Boyle, was the founder and constant friend, adviser and supporter of the Chorley Old Road Congregational Church, of which he was the pastor, and those two names would always live at Chorley Old Road.

A vote of thanks to the speakers was carried on the motion of Mr. J. Kershaw, seconded by Mr. J. Mundy. During the evening anthems were rendered by the choir, and solos by Miss Williams and Miss K. Williams, and these and other helpers were thanked on the motion of Mr. W. M. Balshaw, seconded by Mr. Harry Gregson.

At the Deacons' meeting on October 21st, 1909, the chairman explained that Mr. Cooper was desirous that the governing body of the new Institute should be in the hands of the Diaconate, and the secretary was instructed to write Mr. Cooper and inform him "that we take this opportunity of expressing our opinion that the step he is taking is a wise one, and we hope that the teachers will be in accord with the motion which he intends to submit at the Annual Teachers' Meeting." This matter was agreed to at this meeting on October 24th, and the following resolution recorded on the books :—

"That from the time of the Memorial Institute the management of the Recreation Club be placed under the direct control of the Deacons."

The secretary of the Deacons was instructed on November 16th, 1909, to write to the school secretary thanking him for the letter but pointing out that the resolution should be as follows :—

"That the governing body of the Memorial Institute should be in the hands of the Diaconate, with the exception of the Sunday services, which should be under the direct control of the Teachers."

The opening of the Memorial Institute took place on April 23rd, 1910, the building being both attractive and spacious, and rooms are provided for every side of institutional work, the fittings being of a very ornate description. At the foot of the staircase to the right of the entrance hall, is a brass tablet bearing the following inscription :—

"This Institute is erected to the Glory of God and sacred to the memory of Frederick Cooper. Born 24th June, 1834; Died 4th November, 1907.



MR. COLIN COOPER.



REV. W. J. COLLIER, M.A.

"A faithful servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, and a devoted worker in connection with the Congregational Churches and Sunday Schools in this town.

"Life's work well done,
Life's day well spent,
Then comes rest.' "

"23rd April, 1910."

There was no formal opening ceremony, the Institute being thrown open to inspection at three o'clock, and came in for a great deal of admiration from a large number of visitors.

In the evening a largely-attended meeting was held in the schoolroom, the Rev. W. J. Collier presiding, and there was also on the platform Mr. Colin Cooper, the Mayor and Mayoress (Counc. J. Tyas Cooper, J.P., and Mrs. Cooper), the Rev. T. L. Burrows (former pastor), and Mr. J. Boyle, J.P.

After the opening devotions, the chairman said that he had that day come to the realisation of a hope that he never expected to see realised. He had desired an Institute, but he never hoped to get such a one as they now had. He hoped it would enable them to realise all that a Church ought to be. The gift was all the greater because it came to them from a man whom they honoured so highly as they did their Sunday School superintendent. They were all proud of it because of the honourable and noble name with which it was associated—a name that would always live in the annals of Bolton Congregationalism. He traced the roots of the Institute to the developments which had taken place in the work of the Primary School. He spoke of the social, educational, religious and spiritual aims of the institute, and in the name of the friends of the congregation and school, he heartily thanked Mr. Colin Cooper for the noble gift he had bestowed upon them, and earnestly trusted that the soul that they would put into the beautiful body he had given them would be worthy of it.

The Rev. T. Langford Burrows referred to the building as erected to the memory of one whom he could briefly describe as one of God's good men, and said Mr. Colin Cooper could not have thought of a memorial which would be more pleasing to his brother.

Mr. Boyle also spoke, appealing to the young people of the school to make the most of the opportunities offered to them in the Institute.

Mr. R. Ashton alluded to his 32 years' connection with Mr. Colin Cooper in the work of the church and school, and on behalf of the congregation made a presentation to him and Mrs. Cooper as a mark of esteem and appreciation of their work.

The present took the form of a portrait in oils of the late Mr. F. Cooper, the work of Mr. F. Balshaw, and a handsome silver rose bowl, which was suitably acknowledged by Mr. Cooper.

There is a stone built into the wall which bears the following inscription :—

“ Frederick Cooper Memorial. This stone was laid on July 31st, 1909, by Miss Hester Mary Cooper.”

CHAPTER LIX.

KAY STREET MISSION. STARTING WORK HERE.

Looking for a Site—Circular Issued—Date of Opening—Results of First Year's Work with Committee.

The first steps taken in the direction of starting a Mission in the Kay Street district was an instruction to Mr. F. Cooper to make an enquiry as to the occupation of the Lark Street Temperance Hall as a Mission Station. This was given at the Deacons' Meeting on April 1st, 1889. This Hall was the property of the late Mr. J. P. Thomasson, and was at that time temporarily occupied by Mawdsley Street people. The enquiry seems to have resulted in no definite steps being taken then. However, at a Church Tea Meeting held on October 7th, 1891, it was unanimously agreed upon that the time was come for this Church to enter upon some mission work, and that the locality of Lark Street be first considered.

At a meeting of the Church and Congregation on October 29th, it was further agreed that the Mission Committee be empowered to expend a suitable amount for the carrying forward the resolution come to by the Church on the 7th inst.

The preparations for the commencement of the work at Kay Street Mission were ushered in by a Sale of Work, which

was opened on Thursday, June 11th, 1891, by Mrs. Wolstenholme, wife of the pastor, who explained the origin and objects of the sale in a speech which everybody agreed was an excellent one. A vote of thanks was moved to her by Mr. H. Sturges, seconded by Mr. J. T. Cooper, and carried with enthusiasm. The sale proved a very pleasant and profitable affair; only £150 was aimed at, but the total proceeds amounted to £212; and as expenses only came to £15, there was a net sum of £197, which expunged the debt and left over a very respectable balance for mission purposes. Arising out of the pleasant intercourse of the sale a picnic to Whalley was arranged, and came off on Wednesday, the 24th. About 50 enjoyed the advantage of the trip and found it a delightful experience, and now is a pleasant memory.

The next step was the issuing of the following circular:—

“To the Members of the Church and Congregation of
St. George’s Road Congregational Church.

“The Committee appointed to make the necessary preparations for the New Mission, desire to put before you the following short statement.

“Owing to no other site being obtainable, the Committee have, with the consent and approbation of the Church, arranged to rent from the owner, Mr. Holmes, part of a disused foundry, at the corner of Kay Street and St. George’s Street. This building consists of a large hall and a side wing, and the Committee consider it a very suitable building for the purpose.

“After going very carefully into the estimates for furnishing, heating, and other necessary appliances, and excluding everything which might be considered superfluous, the Committee find that an initial expenditure will be required of about £200.

“With a view to starting the Mission on its way in a satisfactory manner, the Committee appeal to the Members of the Church and Congregation for aid. At the last Committee Meeting it was felt that a special effort was desirable, and the Members then present pledged themselves to contributions amounting in the aggregate to upwards of £40. Since then, promises have been received which bring the total amount up to over £60.

“There is a balance in the Bank, available for Mission work, of about £70, but this it is proposed to apply towards the expenses of the first year’s working.

“The Committee commend the matter most earnestly to your consideration. A large number of volunteers have come forward to help in the work, and if the place can only be well started, it is confidently hoped that really good and useful service may be rendered there. If every member of the Church and Congregation will undertake to contribute some amount, however small, the sum required will be raised without difficulty, and the workers enabled to start with their minds clear of all anxiety.

" Subscriptions will be received by the Church Treasurer, Mr. OTTEWILL, Mr. JAMES ATHERTON, Mr. J. F. WARBRICK, and the Hon. Sec., Mr. C. M. BRAZIL.

" Signed, on behalf of the Committee,

" J. R. WOLSTENHOLME, Pastor,

" DAVID OTTEWILL, Treasurer.

" CLARENCE M. BRAZIL, Hon. Sec."

On the second of December, 1891, a Mission Committee was appointed to act for four months, and at the expiration of that time a properly constituted committee would then be appointed.

The subject of the Kay Street Mission was talked over, and the members of the Committee considered, and also Trustees for the responsibility of the financial arrangement towards the landlord, etc. Messrs. James Atherton, Lomax, J. F. Warbrick, and C. M. Brazil, were suggested, and the Mission was eventually opened on January 30th, 1892.

On February 1st, 1892, a rather important declaration was made by the Church : " That all religious and educational work emanating from it are sustained by and are under the control and direction of this Church."

The report of the first year's work here is rather interesting, and reads as follows :—

" COMMITTEE :

" THE DEACONS, ex-officio.

Caughey, Miss	Holt, Mr.
Eckersley, Miss	Taylor, Mr. John
Farrington, Mrs.	Thomasson, Mr. J: A.
Hutton, Miss	Thomasson, Mr. W.
Bentley, Mr. Handel	Topping, Mr. Miles
Fletcher, Mr. S.	Whewell, Mr. J.
Gildersleve, Mr.	Warbrick, Mr. J. F.

" Secretary to Committee : Mr. H. S. STURGES.

" In presenting this, the first Annual Report, the workers in connection with what is now commonly known amongst us as 'The Mission,' desire to lay before you a report which shall not only describe the work attempted and accomplished, but may cause a more extended interest to be taken in our efforts to ameliorate the conditions under which some of our poor live. We feel that if this can only be done, a sphere of usefulness is open to us at Kay Street which will be of untold benefit to each and all.

" That a blessing is upon our work cannot be doubted when we consider the ready manner in which our friends have supported the movement, responding generously to every appeal, the numbers attending the services, and the way in which we have been upheld and sustained under much that has been disappointing and discouraging. If space only permitted, we could tell of homes which, when we first entered them, were neglected, dirty, and comfortless, but now are changed, so far

as the circumstances surrounding them will permit, into decent places to live in. Drunkards have been reclaimed ; in some cases if not altogether induced to abandon the old habits, a check at least has been placed upon the license with which they acted. This taste for drink is the great enemy with which we have to contend ; we have very great hope that it is possible to do some good when we have persuaded any to take the pledge and make an effort to keep it.

" Much distress has been relieved during the somewhat severe winter we have had. Food, clothing, boots, clogs, coals, and small gifts of money have been distributed in necessitous and deserving cases : how necessary such help is and what the needs of our very poor are, no conception can be formed unless you go into their homes. One great difficulty has to be first overcome, however, viz., to learn to discriminate between the really deserving poor and those who make an habitual practice of preying upon the charitably disposed. This is no easy task, because as a rule the most deserving hide their poverty ; a good deal of tact has to be exercised in dealing with these. Of course we are frequently imposed upon, but this only makes us the more careful for the future, and the lesson so learnt is not forgotten.

" Our thanks are due to many thoughtful friends who have sent us gifts of cast-off clothing, boots, hats, etc., as also food and money. May we again remind you that any cast-off clothing, no matter how far worn, can be made useful. May we give you an example of what has been done only the very day on which this article is written. A boy, a bonny bright-faced lad of eleven, who is one of our most regular attenders at the Sunday School, whatever the weather may be he is always to be found in his class morning and afternoon, was noticed to be very badly clad. Our old clothes chest was overhauled, and stockings and boots found for him. When he came to put them on we found that he had been really walking bare-footed, as the sole of the clogs and the feet of what had once been stockings were altogether gone. It is by such timely help that the children can be saved much suffering in the future.

" Our Saturday evening Entertainments have proved a great success, many very enjoyable evenings having been spent in this way during the winter.

" The sewing class is much appreciated by the elder girls. Under the able direction of Miss Caughey, assisted by many willing helpers, it has been very successful, the results of this effort being very encouraging.

" A seaside trip was given at the end of August to about 120 children, the place chosen being Lytham. The Manual might easily be filled with interesting matter descriptive of this trip. Anyone who had the privilege of being present on that occasion will never forget it. Not much brightness comes into the lives of these slum-children, a day at the seaside being a revelation to them which can only be compared to the sight of a new world. It is our intention to give, if possible, such a trip this year. We would ask you to remember this, and assist us by your generous gifts.

" House to house visitation has been carried on, and although we have had to work in perhaps the worst slums in Bolton, we have not had one case reported where any of our workers have been insulted or received in any but the most friendly way. This is rather remarkable, as it is not infrequent that opposition of a very objectionable kind is met with in this

kind of work. It is by this means that we get into the life of the people, and are thus able to help them in many ways. The sick and the dying have been tended by loving hands, and words of comfort and consolation spoken, which have made the last moments of some happier.

"The Sunday School is of course our greatest work, because we have a hope in the children which we have not in the adults. Bad habits are hard to overcome, but the children may be trained to avoid them. We have an average attendance on Sunday afternoons of about 120; this the workers feel confident would have been larger had we had accommodation for the elder scholars. This necessity having arisen, class-rooms have been provided by the landlord (Mr. Holmes), who very kindly agreed to our proposition that he should do the needful alterations to the property.

"We face the present year with a confidence gained by experience, trusting in a higher power than our own for the needful guidance in all our efforts.

"THE WORKERS."

Early Workers in the Mission.

Mrs. Farrington.	Miss Johnson.
," W. Farrington.	," Sidlow
Miss Caughey	," Shepherd.
," M. Cranshaw.	," E. Shepherd.
," E. Farrington.	Mr. James Fyles.
," J. Eckersley.	," Gildersleve.
," Holt.	," Holt.
," A. Horrocks.	," J. A. Thomasson.
," M. A. Horrocks.	," W. Thomasson.
," Heyes.	," M. Topping.
Mr. F. W. Peaples.	

Secretary to Mission - - - - - Mr. H. BENTLEY.
Superintendent - - - - - Mr. J. F. WARBRICK."

CHAPTER LX.

CONSOLIDATING THE WORK.

Co-superintendent Appointed—George Harwood Takes Services—Resignation of Mr. J. F. Warbrick—Relieving Distress—Alterations to Hall—Attempt at Land Purchase—Church House—Young Men's Institute Opened—Mr. James Fyles' Memorial—Christmas Breakfast.

At a special meeting of Deacons on August 3rd, 1894, a letter was read from Mr. J. F. Warbrick, resigning his position as Superintendent of the Kay Street Mission, to take effect on September 30th. The matter was further considered on September 5th, Mr. Warbrick being also asked to attend. After considerable conversation, in which Mr. Warbrick expressed his willingness to continue if assistance could be

found for him, it was agreed to suggest to the Mission workers the desirability of appointing a co-superintendent along with Mr. Warbrick, and that the Deacons give the assurance they will render all the assistance they can in securing the man they may appoint.

On September 17th, 1894, a letter was received from the School Secretary of the Kay Street Mission, by the Deacons. This intimated that the workers had unanimously elected Mr. Fred Isherwood as co-superintendent with Mr. Warbrick. Mr. F. Isherwood eventually agreed to act in this position.

On the application of Mr. Warbrick, it was agreed that George Harwood, M.A., preach in the Church morning and evening on Sunday, February 3rd, 1895, on behalf of Kay Street Mission; Mr. Steele assisted Mr. Harwood at these services.

A special Deacons' Meeting was held on February 2nd, 1896, to consider a letter from Mr. J. F. Warbrick, in which he resigned his position as superintendent of the Kay Street Mission, and eventually Mr. J. B. Parkinson and Mr. James Atherton were deputed to see him in reference to the matter. Mr. Warbrick held to his resignation this time, and Mr. Fred Isherwood then took hold of the reins as superintendent of this mission, and Mr. James Fyles acted as co-superintendent.

Mr. J. F. Warbrick came from an old Congregational stock—a great grandfather, the Rev. Joseph Sowdon, having been minister of Duke's Alley Chapel from 1801 to 1813. He was in labour abundant. For over four years his work as superintendent of Kay Street Mission prospered, and when in 1896 he resigned this position, the esteem of his fellow-workers found expression in a presentation made to him of a large number of helpful books, and a handsome reading lamp, bearing the following inscription:—

“ Kay Street Congregational Mission, Bolton, April 27th, 1896. Presented to Mr. J. F. Warbrick, in recognition of his zeal and manifold labours in founding and establishing the Mission, and of his devotion as superintendent.”

During his connection with the Mission he was often called upon to undertake the work of lay preaching, and the training and practice which he had during those four years made it comparatively easy for him to take up more extended work.

This he did, often taking three services in a day. Mr. Warbrick always took an active share in the Christian and philanthropic work of the town and district generally. He was a member of the Manchester District Lay Preachers' Association, in connection with the Lancashire Congregational Union, and of the Committee for the County of Lancashire, the Committee of the Bolton Poor Protection Society, and was Chairman of the Committee for the Poor Children's Fund, "From the slums to the sea," of which the Kay Street friends were the pioneers. The Court and Alley Concerts interested him, and he became one of the secretaries, and for four years filled the post of Treasurer to the Bolton District Congregational Council, and in this capacity did much to help forward the Extension Movement.

During the great strike of 1897, the resources of the Mission Benevolent Fund were exhausted, and on application to the Church, grants were made to this fund from time to time in order to relieve some portion of the distress prevailing. As one of the workers then, I can say that it was a strenuous time, and right nobly did the workers at both Mission and Church respond to the calls made upon them. The large hall of the Mission was much improved in July, 1898, the rough stone walls being plastered and wainscotted, and when this work was finished, the room then presented a much more pleasing appearance. The whole cost of this work was defrayed by funds supplied by Mr. James Atherton.

The following lines were specially written and recited at the Re-union of past and present workers, scholars, and worshippers, held on Saturday, January 29th, 1898:—

Six years have passed since within these walls
 The first Party and Meeting took place,
 And many are here who were not here then,
 While there is more than one absent face.
 We miss Mr. Wolstenholme's cheery voice,
 His kind greeting to one and all ;
 We are glad our first Superintendent,
 Mr. Warbrick, has come at our call ;
 Though Mr. Brazil could not see his way
 To come and be present with us to-day.

Once again we have met together,
 On this our anniversary day,
 To join in a hearty thanksgiving
 To God, Who hath guided our way,
 Who through all these six years hath led us,
 And given to our efforts success ;

We ask for His help in the future,
 And that He this Mission will bless ;
 Will grant courage and strength to press onward
 And to reach forth for the highest reward.

The work that has been done in the past
 Cannot be weigh'd by word or by thought,
 Nor what good has sprung from each Class,
 Where the Saviour's Love has been taught ;
 And the scholars who six years ago
 Met together on that opening day,
 Are not all gathered here to-night—
 Some are over the seas far away,
 While to some there has come the Master's call,
 And they are within the Heavenly Hall.

But now we will turn to the future,
 Help'd by many bright thoughts of the past,
 We will start again our work anew,
 And act as if this year were the last.
 With our Pastor, Mr. Barber,
 And our Superintendents as well,
 With Messrs. Bentley and Thomasson,
 The good we shall do, who can tell ?
 If we only remember our Father's care,
 And all joys and sorrows tell Him in prayer.

Let us then each and all of us try
 In the power of God to do right,
 May we work in union together,
 Against all that is wrong bravely fight ;
 And when our years here shall be over,
 When we're called to the home above,
 May all who are here this evening
 Dwell for ever in the House of Love,
 Where among the ransomed we shall sing
 The eternal praises of Christ our King.

CISSIE FYLES.

In 1901 an attempt was made to purchase the land on which the Mission stands. The matter was discussed by the Deacons at various times, and on May 1st, the Rev. George Barber read a letter from Mr. James Atherton, offering £400 towards the purchase of the Kay Street Mission land. Subsequently Messrs. Isherwood and Fyles were introduced to the Deacons, and the discussion became general. Mr. Isherwood offered suggestions, but it was found that no progress could be made pending information to be obtained by Mr. Ottewill. When the required details were obtained, the terms were deemed prohibitive, and Mr. Atherton's offer was declined with thanks, after the details had been supplied to him. The matter, however, did not drop until an attempt had been made to purchase the Mission premises, which likewise failed.

On March 4th, 1902, the Minister and Deacons met the

Sunday School Teachers and deputation from the Mission to discuss the need of a Church House. Mr. Thomasson spoke at great length on the subject, advocating the scheme being self-supporting. A resolution was passed, "that we heartily agree with the idea of a Church House, and that a large meeting of the young men of the Church and Sunday School be called to formulate a scheme." Nothing definite in the shape of a Church House was arranged, but eventually a Club House was started, and Mr. Handel Bentley's letter of invitation to the opening of the Young Men's Institute was accepted, and the Pastor and Deacons attended the same.

Mr. James Nicholson's letter and the rules of the Institute were afterwards read and considered, and the Deacons present thought the rules were satisfactory as far as they could judge. This was really started at the request of some of our young men, and the teachers decided in August to obtain premises in the neighbourhood and furnish them, to be used as a Young Men's Institute. Our appeal for the necessary funds to alter the premises (No. 1, Chapel Street) and furnish them for the purpose, was most generously responded to by ladies and gentlemen connected with the Church, and the rooms were formally opened in October, 1902, by Mr. James Atherton.

One result of this new departure is that we are already realising a great improvement in the attendance of our young men at Sunday School and at the various services, and a greater desire on their part to do something to help others to live better lives.

The Institute was open all day and every day except Sundays, and our young men were pleased at any time to see the friends from the Church in the rooms.

We may add that the young men themselves paid three-pence per week each towards the maintenance of the Institute.

At the close of the year we lost the services of our Superintendent, Mr. F. Isherwood, he having accepted an invitation from the friends at Chorley Old Road to take the office of Superintendent of their Sunday School. The teachers, while deeply regretting the separation from one who has been their superintendent and leader for ten years, yet recognise that the new work on which he has entered is one in which his character and undoubted abilities will find ample scope.

On the resignation of Mr. Isherwood, the workers were glad to welcome Mr. James Nicholson, Junr., as co-superintendent here is his place.

On April 2nd, 1902, a resolution of sympathy and appreciation of Mr. James Fyle's services at the Church and the Kay Street Mission was passed, and a letter of sympathy sent to his family when he passed away at this time. Mr. James Fyles was co-superintendent with Mr. Fred Isherwood at the Mission, and the sense of loss occasioned by his death was a deep one. To his piety, his devoted labours, his long experience as a Christian worker, his affectionate interest in and desire for the welfare of the parents and scholars, the Mission is indebted for a very large portion of that success to which it has attained. During the year 1910, a tablet to his memory was erected in the Mission. Mr. Fyles was the Superintendent from 1896 to 1902, and his work at St. George's Road will long be remembered.

The following are the words inscribed on the tablet :—

“ In Loving Memory of James Fyles, who in well doing and Patient Endurance, Faithfully 'Showed Forth His Praise'; a devoted worker, and for some time Superintendent of this Mission.”

When Mr. Fyles died, Mr. J. A. Thomasson was elected as the superintendent in his place.

In 1902 a breakfast was provided for poor children on Christmas Day. The cost of this was defrayed by the Young Women's and Young Men's Classes, all honour to them. In 1903 this was repeated, and about 130 poor children provided for in this way. This is still continued, but the number of children who attend number about 500, and the Young Men's Class make themselves responsible for it now.

Mr. James Hodgkinson presents each child with two oranges and a bag of sweets on leaving the Mission, and this gift crowns their Christmas joys. He has been unfailing in his benefactions in this way for some years.

At a social on February 21st, 1903, Mr. Isherwood was presented with a handsome reading lamp, subscribed for by the teachers, scholars, and parents, in recognition of his many years devoted services in their midst.

CHAPTER LXI.

MISSIONER APPOINTED.

Appointment of Mr. Calder—Resignation of Mr. Handel Bentley—Messrs. James and Hugh Thornley—Mr. John Fyles—Territorialism—Extension Efforts—Site Chosen—Claim for Duke's Alley Trust Money—Negotiations Relating Thereto.

The question of an Evangelist or permanent Missioner came up for discussion on May 25th, 1903, and also on June 24th, and eventually on December 2nd, 1903, the Pastor introduced the matter of Kay Street Mission. After a lengthy discussion, the following memorandum was suggested for the consideration of the Church :—

“ In order that the present income of the Church should not suffer we recommend that the present separate fund now instituted in view of the appointment of a Missioner for Kay Street, be maintained, and that a special Treasurer be appointed along with two collectors for the purpose of obtaining the amount of the Missioner's stipend.”

At the Deacons' Meeting, August 3rd, 1904, the Rev. George Barber reported the visit of the deputation to Wigan, and moved “ that Mr. Calder be requested to take the Kay Street Mission service on the following Thursday.”

On September 28th, 1904, the Mission Committee were prepared to move at a Special Meeting to be held the following Wednesday, “ that a Missioner be appointed.” At this meeting the appointment of Mr. Thomas Calder as Missioner for Kay Street was decided upon, and on October 31st, 1904, the welcome to the Mission of Mr. Calder was arranged for. Mr. Calder, as a preliminary, entered upon his work here on November 1st, 1904, and this has been blessed abundantly.

On November 5th a Tea Party and Meeting afterwards was held, to welcome Mr. and Mrs. Calder, at which Mr. Barber presided. Mr. Hutchinson and the Superintendents, Messrs. J. A. Thomasson and James Nicholson, Junr., took part. Mr. Calder actually commenced his work on November 7th, 1904.

Mr. Calder is a native of Glasgow, and was brought to a saving knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus during the visit of Messrs. Moody and Sankey in 1874. He left business



MR. THOMAS CALDER,
Missioner.



INTERIOR—KAY STREET MISSION.

and launched out into his life's Mission Work in Possilpark, the scene of Professor Henry Drummond's work, and by whose fine influence Mr. Calder profited in the same work, in the same place, and at the same time.

Whilst carrying on his Mission work, Mr. Calder studied at the Glasgow University, and received his theological training under the Rev. James Morison, D.D., Principal of the Evangelical Union Theological Hall. He was a member of his Church in North Dundas Street. Having secured his University and Theological certificates, he plunged into Evangelism, and in response to an urgent call came into England, and for a number of years conducted special services all over the country.

Out of a budget of testimonials the following describes the man and his work.

"Mr. Thomas Calder is an able and interesting preacher, very thoughtful, original, and deeply spiritual and convincing. He is loyal, genial, and easy to work with, and is, wherever he goes, greatly beloved. He is a good visitor, and has been much blessed in the homes of the people. His work has been abundantly blessed. He is emphatically a soul-winner, and is willing to spend and be spent. His work is thorough and abiding. As a permanent Missioner, he has led most fruitful Theological Classes, giving to the Church able ministers, earnest laymen, and devoted teachers and Christian workers."

Mr. Handel Bentley, who was Sunday School Secretary at the Mission for about twelve years, resigned in 1904 owing to the exigencies of his business compelling him to reside out of Bolton. He was married to Miss Sefton, another worker, and in Mr. Bentley and his wife the Mission lost two of its most valuable hard-working friends, and their places are not easily filled.

During the year 1904, the workers had to record the loss of Mr. James Thornley and Mr. Hugh Thornley as workers there. Mr. Hugh Thornley was one of the oldest teachers, and as one of the teachers of the Young Men's Class, Organist in the Sunday School, Chairman of the Band of Hope Committee, and Secretary, rendered very valuable service to the Mission. On the other hand they had the pleasure of welcoming new comrades in Mr. John Fyles, who took up the duties of choirmaster with enthusiasm, and Miss Hodgkinson, who undertook the duties of organist for the Sunday evening service.

While the premises at Kay Street are not quite suitable to the growing needs of the people connected therewith, there is a good band of earnest workers, and a leader who has thrown himself heart and soul into the work being done there.

The Kay Street Mission has adopted a scheme which its earnest Missioner, Mr. T. Calder, describes as "Territorialism." A "territory" is divided into parishes of 25 to 30 families. Each parish is under its chief, who holds himself ready for every Christian service to the households under his charge. In connection with this work the Mission now has a weekly calendar for distribution in all the homes of the "territories," 660 being distributed weekly. The distributors in calling at each house discover cases of sickness, and even hunger. They are making the presence of the Church in their neighbourhood an active reality. Each Calendar has a brief letter to its readers, selected Bible readings for the week, and a list of the week's services. If the people do not come to Church, the Church must go to the people.

A special meeting of the Deacons was called on March 22nd, 1909, to consider the advisability of sending in a claim for the money in the hands of the Charity Commissioners which was obtained as the proceeds of the sale of Duke's Alley Chapel. After much discussion, the following resolution was moved by Mr. Warburton and seconded by Mr. Kirk:—

"That the Rev. George Barber, Messrs. Bromiley, Barlow, Beswick and James Nicholson, Jr., be appointed as a deputation to wait on Mr. J. T. Cooper, solicitor to the Trust, to ascertain the conditions relating to the Trust, with a view to making a claim for the money for new premises at Kay Street."

This matter again came up for consideration on April 20th, 1909, and the following gentlemen appointed as a sub-committee:—The Rev. Geo. Barber, Messrs. Nicholson, Haywood, Alfred Holt, and W. Barlow, to look out for a site for a New Mission Building, and to get some plan prepared which could be covered by the money to be received from the Charity Commissioners. In case of an additional sum being obtained, that a larger scheme be undertaken subject to the approval of the Trustees and Diaconate.

On July 28th, 1909, the report of the Kay Street Sub-committee was presented to the Deacons. This stated that a suitable site had been found at the corner of Cross Street

and Kay Street, which could be purchased at a reasonable rate with a very small ground rent, and the same was recommended. It was resolved that a deputation consisting of Mr. J. Nicholson, Junr., and Mr. Barlow present the scheme suggested by Mr. Nicholson to Mr. J. T. Cooper, Solicitor, to the Trustees of the Duke's Alley Chapel Trust Fund.

On June 1st, 1910, the Trustees of Duke's Alley Funds, having requested a reply respecting their suggestion that we should agree to take half the Fund and Tonge Moor the other half, subject to the approval of the Charity Commissioners, we resolved to reply : " We are not in a position to undertake our Scheme without the whole of the money, for which we again appeal."

On April 2nd, 1912, the Secretary reported that the Charity Commissioners and the solicitors of the Duke's Alley Trustees seemed favourable to the whole of the funds being available for our Kay Street Mission, it was decided that a deputation consisting of the Rev. Howard Mudie, and Messrs. Nicholson and Barlow, be appointed to wait upon the Bolton and District Congregational Council, and the Duke's Alley Trustees, respecting the matter.

On September 19th, 1912, Mr. Barlow reported discussion at the last meeting of the Bolton Congregational Council, re Duke's Alley Trust. The Council suggested that a meeting of representatives be held from St. George's Road, Kay Street Mission, Mawdsley Street and Tonge Moor, to discuss the question, and it was resolved that we fall in with this arrangement, and that the Rev. Howard Mudie and Mr. William Barlow be our representatives.

The year 1912 was the richest in fruit in the history of the Mission. During the winter months showers of blessing descended upon the work here and many were brought to the Saviour. Of the 49 who joined the Church as the result of these efforts, 31 were young men and women. The total number of members on the Church Roll from the Mission is 60, and 51 of these have been added during Mr. Calder's ministry here.

By the generosity of Councillor Alfred E. Holt, in providing the needful furniture, a Primary Department was commenced in December, 1912, and Mrs. James Nicholson, Junr.,

was unanimously chosen as superintendent, and with her group of young helpers, she has made the Primary a real attraction to the little ones, who now number over 60. The Sunday School Report records two superintendents in charge here, Mr. J. A. Thomasson, and Mr. James Nicholson, Junr., with 24 teachers as helpers, and 228 scholars in attendance. Some 22 different channels of service have been inaugurated, and are regularly in operation.

On January 6th, 1913, Mr. Barlow reported the result of the recent Conference with respect to the Duke's Alley Trust, to the effect that the Sub-committee of the Council did not feel disposed to give the whole amount to Kay Street Mission, and suggested a division of two-thirds to Kay Street and one-third to Tonge Moor. A resolution that we do not agree to any division of the funds of the Duke's Alley Trust, was passed. This resolution I agree with, as the result of my historical researches to see how the fund was built up.

This Mission is now 21 years old and its future presents possibilities of boundless usefulness.

APPENDIX.

OLD SEATHOLDERS AT DUKE'S ALLEY CHAPEL.

The following contains such an interesting amount of information respecting the old Bolton Families connected with Duke's Alley Chapel, that I have thought it desirable to collect it together and record same.

Ainsworth, George, Leather Cutter, Deansgate, father of Mrs. Thomas Cooper.

Almond, James, Book-keeper, Mortfield Bleachworks.

Almond, Abel, Bleacher, Little Bolton, son of the above.

Almond, Ralph, Timber Merchant, nephew of the above James Almond.

Arden, Thomas, Bread Baker, Bradshawgate.

Ashall, William, Watchmaker.

Ashworth, Benjamin, Registrar, Tonge Cemetery.

Atkinson, Thomas, Shopkeeper, Great Moor Street.

Badger, Joseph and Richard, Cabinet Makers, Bank Street, the latter at one time Borough Reeve.

Ballantine, Thomas, Editor, *Bolton Free Press*.

Balshaw, Joseph, Bolton County Court.

Banks, Mary Ann, afterwards Mrs. David Grey.

Banks, John } brothers of the above.

Banks, Henry } brothers of the above.

Banks, Alice, sister of the above.

Barrett, Thomas, Bread Baker, Bradshawgate.

Baythorpe, James, Blacksmith, father of Mrs. James Holden, Contractor.

Beddows, Mrs., daughter of the late Mr. J. Bromiley, Bleacher.

Bell, Joseph, Cotton Spinner, High Street, "Lum's Factory."

Bell, George, Engineer, who was afterwards, with Mrs. Bell, killed at the railway accident at Harrow in 1870.

Berington, Mr., Watchmaker, Deansgate.

Berington, John, son of the above.

Bewick, John, Firwood Bleachworks.

Birchby, James, Mechanic.

Blain, Mr., Woollen Draper, Deansgate, father of Mr. W. Blain, Chemist and Druggist, Market Street.

Blinkhorn, William, Manufacturing Chemist, Little Bolton, builder of the famous Blinkhorn chimney in 1842 and now called Dobson's chimney.

Booth, Richard, Shoemaker, Halliwell.

Booth, Howard, son of the above.

Booth, Peter, brother of the above.

Borsay, James, Cart Sheet Maker, Derby Street.

Borsay, Daniel, son of the above.

Boyle, Robert, Architect, who removed to St. Anne's-on-Sea.

Bradshaw, Joseph, Agent, Gilnow Park.

Bradshaw, Jane, sister of the above, widow of the late Alderman John Brown.

Bradshaw, Betty, mother of the above two.

- Brierley, James, with John Hargreaves, London and North-Western Railway, and lessee of the Bolton and Kenyon Railway when first opened.
- Brierley, Joseph, son of the above.
- Bromiley, John, Bleacher, Messrs. Slater & Co.
- Bromiley, Roger, Mill Manager, son of the above.
- Bromiley, Thomas, son of John Bromiley.
- Bromiley, Miss, daughter of John Bromiley.
- Brunlees, James—Sir James Brunlees, Civil Engineer, London; Engineer of the Mersey Tunnel, New Brighton Pier, and other important works. He married Elizabeth, daughter of Mr. James Kirkman, senr.
- Burdon, James, Surgeon, Wood Street.
- Burnett, Andrew, Engineer at the Union Foundry.
- Byers, James, Travelling Draper.
- Byers, John, Travelling Draper.
- Clarkson, Mr., Comb Maker.
- Crompton, Peter, Clogger, Churchgate.
- Crompton, William, Mortfield Bleachworks.
- Crompton, Margaret, daughter of above.
- Crompton, Thomas } sons of W. Crompton.
- Crompton, Noah } sons of W. Crompton.
- Cron, Mrs., widow of Mr. John Cron, one of the last of the old Boltonians who wore a pigtail. He was strongly against the introduction of music into places of worship, and objected to a fiddle being played.
- Cron, Misses, daughters of the above, one of whom married the late Mr. Naisby, Draper.
- Cross, John, father of Mr. J. K. Cross, late M.P. for Bolton.
- Crossland, George, Engineer.
- Crossley, John, retired Congregational minister, father of Mr. P. Crossley, clerk to the Farnworth Local Board.
- Cullen, Thomas, Mayor of Bolton, 1841-2. Justice of the Peace, Alderman for the Borough from 1838 to 1844.
- Cullen, James, nephew of the above.
- Cunliffe, James, Cheesemonger.
- Cunliffe, Richard, Mill Manager.
- Cunliffe, William, son of the above.
- Curry, Martin, Millwright, father of Mr. W. Curry, Photographer.
- Dixon, Thomas, Engineer, Low Moor Ironworks.
- Dixon, Benson } brothers of the above.
- Dixon, Robert } brothers of the above.
- Dickinson, Richard, Printer, Bridge Street, father of Mr. Dickinson, Coal Agent, St. George's Road.
- Dickinson, Mrs., widow of the above.
- Dickinson, William, Waste Dealer.
- Donaldson, Captain.
- Doull, John, Contractor.
- Eland, Thomas, Pawnbroker, son of an Exciseman.
- Entwistle, Roger, auctioneer.
- Evans, Thomas, Flour Dealer, Oxford Street, father of the late Mr. William Evans, *Manchester Evening News*, and grandfather of Mrs. Dr. Flitcroft.
- Ferguson, Adam, formerly Manager of the Bank of Bolton, and also of the firm of Ferguson & Cooper, Solicitors, Fold Street.
- Fielding, Richard, Grocer, Bank Street, a famous hunter who regularly followed the hounds over eighty years ago.
- Firth, Mrs. Jane, sister to John Bewick, Bleacher.

- Fitton, John, Stone Mason, Howell Croft.
 Fitton, James, Shopkeeper, Bank Street, son of the above.
 Fitton, Misses, daughters of the above John.
 Fleming, James, Manufacturer, Bridgeman Place.
 Flitcroft, William, Waste Dealer, and afterwards of Lostock Hall, near Farrington.
 Fray, William, Farmer, Halliwell.
 Fogg, John, Paperhanger.
 Garstang, W., Surgeon.
 Garstang, Mrs.
 Glover, M., Draper, Deansgate.
 Gooden, Thomas, Oil Merchant, Lottery Row.
 Gooden, James, Cabinet Maker.
 Gooden, John, Grocer, Egerton.
 Gordon, John, late Clerk of the Peace.
 Grandin, Mrs., Milliner, Hotel Street.
 Gregson, Thomas, Mayor of Bolton, 1843-4, and Alderman of the Borough from 1838 to 1844.
 Grey, David, Foundryman and Shopkeeper.
 Haigh, Abraham, Cotton Spinner, Bridge Street.
 Haigh, Thomas, Shopkeeper, Moor Lane.
 Hall, Mrs., of Bank Top, Sharples.
 Hardacre, Mr., Painter, Old Hall Street.
 Harwood, Laurence, father of Ald. E. G. Harwood, J.P., Ex-Mayor.
 Hick, Benjamin, Ironfounder, father of Mr. John Hick, formerly M.P. for Bolton.
 Hood, James, Townsman, Ainsworth Bleachworks.
 Hood, Thomas, Shopkeeper, Folds Road.
 Horrocks, William, Mill Manager, Dacca Spinning Company.
 Houghton, John, father of W. Houghton, Shoemaker, Newport Street.
 Howarth, Richard, Sizer, Spa Lane.
 Howarth, Thomas, Schoolmaster.
 Howman, William, Tea Dealer, Wigan.
 Howcroft, Herman, Man-of-War's Man, uncle of Mr. William Milligan.
 Hulton, John, Solicitor, Bowker's Row, father of Mr. James Cross Hulton (Hulton, Son and Harwood).
 Jackson, John, Bleacher.
 Jackson, George, Clerk with Mr. Haigh, Cotton Spinner.
 Jackson, Mrs., mother of Mr. Michael Jackson, Chorley Old Road.
 Jones, Frederick, Brushmaker, Ashburner Street, father of Mrs. Farrar, Silverwell Street, and brother to the late Rev. W. Jones, Mawdsley Street.
 Kevan, John, Book-keeper, Messrs. Crook and Dean's Foundry, Folds Road, uncle of Ald. Peter and Mr. James Kevan, Accountants.
 Kirkman, James, Ironfounder, Howell Croft.
 Kirkman, James, jr., son of the above.
 Kirkman, Thomas, Ironfounder, Howell Croft.
 Lee, William, Flour Dealer, father of Mrs. Joseph Bradshaw, Gilnow Park.
 Lees, Mr., Yarn Agent.
 Leeming, Robert, of the firm of Gregson and Leeming, Cotton Spinners.
 Leigh, William, Chairmaker, Oxford Street.

- Lever, James, Grocer, Bank Street, father of Messrs. Lever, Wholesale Grocers, Town Hall Square. Sir W. H. Lever, Bart., is the present representative of this family, and with Lady Lever are amongst our most respected adherents and supporters.
- Lover, Henry, Manufacturer.
- Lomax, Abraham, Waste Dealer.
- Lowe, Joseph, Grocer.
- Lum, Joseph, Cotton Spinner.
- Lum, Mrs., Founder of Lum's Almshouses, now re-erected in Sharples.
- Lunt, Samuel, Book-keeper at Ainsworth's Bleachworks.
- Macoun, Henry, senior, Tailor, Hotel Street.
- Marsh, Mrs., widow of Mr. James Marsh, Cotton Spinner, White Lion Brow.
- Makinson, John, Shoemaker, Bradshawgate.
- Makinson, Hugh, Plumber, Knowsley Street.
- Mancor, James, Watchmaker.
- Martin, William, Manufacturer, Blue Bonnet Hall.
- Martin, Peter, J.P., late of the Street, Rivington, son of above.
- Mason, John, Hole House Farm, Sharples.
- Mason, George, Grocer, Deansgate, Alderman of the Borough from 1865 to 1871, son of above.
- Manchester, John, Butcher, Deansgate.
- Manchester, Thomas, Cloth Dresser, Ridgway Gates.
- Manchester, Peter, Butcher, nephew of John Manchester.
- Matley, David, Mill Manager.
- Mackie, Alexander, formerly of the *Bolton Advertiser*, and of the *Warrington Guardian*.
- McKinnell, John, Tea Dealer.
- McKnight, Mr., Schoolmaster.
- Miller, John, father of Mrs. Richard Shaw, Rivington.
- Milligan, William, Cooper, of Cheapside and Russell Street.
- Nicholson, James, with John Hargreaves, Bolton and Leigh Railway.
- Nicholson, John, son of the above.
- Nimmo, David, Evangelist, afterwards Congregational Minister, and builder of Albert Place Chapel.
- Orrell, George, Whitesmith, father of Mrs. D. Ottewill.
- Ormrod, Joseph, Flour Dealer, Councillor of the Borough from 1875 to 1881, and from 1882 to 1885, and J.P., 1880.
- Ormrod, Samuel, brother of the above.
- Ormrod, Miss, sister of the above.
- Ormrod, Peter, brother of Joseph Ormrod.
- Ormrod, Mrs., wife of the above.
- Parkinson, Thomas, Brass Founder and Coppersmith. Alderman of the Borough from 1847 to 1853.
- Parkinson, J. B., Cashier, Soho Foundry, son of the above.
- Paul, Major, 94th Regiment.
- Pilkington, Richard, Schoolmaster, Bridge Street.
- Pilkington, Edward, Bread Baker, Bradshawgate, brother of the above.
- Pope, Mrs., widow of Mr. Pope, Calico Printer, Horwich Vale, and mother of Mr. Samuel Pope, Q.C., Recorder of Bolton.
- Pye, John, Auctioneer, Mawdsley Street.
- Raper, James H., Schoolmaster, and afterwards Parliamentary agent for the United Kingdom Alliance, and one of the early workers in connection with Albert Place.
- Reeve, Ralph, Mill Manager, Bank Top, afterwards of Reeve and Johnson, Cotton Spinners, Daubhill.

Ritson, Fletcher, Messrs. Ormrod and Hardcastle.
 Rothwell, John, Druggist and Grocer, father of Dr. Rothwell, J.P.
 Rothwell, Miss, daughter of Mr. Rothwell, Bleacher, Mortfield.
 Scott, Moses, Weaver's Joiner, and Coffin Maker, Kay Street.
 Scrimgeour, James, Mill Manager, Farnworth.
 Sharrocks, Samuel, Veterinary Surgeon, Hotel Street.
 Sharrocks, Elizabeth, daughter of the above.
 Sinclair, Peter, Manager, Bolton and Leigh Railway, father of Mr. Arthur Sinclair, one of the candidates for St. Helens in the early Eighties.
 Spiers, Mrs., mother of Mrs. Adam Ferguson.
 Stanton, John, Gentleman, Chapel Alley.
 Steele, John Johnson, Pork Butcher.
 Tait, James McTaggart, Draper, Market Street.
 Taylor, Matthew, Shoemaker.
 Taylor, Samuel, Butcher, Deansgate, grandfather of Mr. Rowland Taylor, Borough Coroner.
 Taylor, William, Flour Dealer, son of the above, and father of Mr. William Taylor, Ironmonger.
 Tong, James, Mining Engineer, Hulton Colliery.
 Wadsworth, John, Mill Manager, Messrs. Ormrod and Hardcastle.
 Wadsworth, Miss, daughter of the above.
 Ward, William, landlord of the Swan Hotel, Churchgate.
 Watson, Mr., Travelling Draper, father of Mr. John Watson, Lithographer.
 Wilde, George, Tea Merchant, Alderman of Bootle.
 Wright, John, Schoolmaster, Moor Lane, who cut the first sod for the Temperance Hall, and one of whose family was the last interred in the Chapel.
 Duke's Alley people were great collectors for the Temperance Hall.

The records of all the seatholders at the Chapel from 1837 to 1854 are in an old volume in the Church safe.

THE GRAVES IN DUKE'S ALLEY CHAPEL.

The land in front of both the chapel and chapel-house was used as a burial ground, and bones have been dug up when excavations for drains have been made under the old school. Eventually, when extensions took place, the graves were enclosed within the walls of the present chapel. The grave-stones in the aisles do not in all cases cover the exact spot where the bodies are buried, for some have been utilised

to flag the aisles with. The following are copies of the grave-stones in question :—

IN THE NORTH AISLE.

I.

Mary, wife of James Fletcher, died August 24, 1776, aged 61 ; also Lawrence Fletcher, died July 13, 1787, age 14.

II.

Ester, daughter of Oliver and Ann Ormrod, of Harwood, died April 9th, 1781, age 41 ; also, Ann, wife of Oliver Ormrod, died May 7, 1791, age 80. Also, Oliver Ormrod, died April 29th, 1803, age 89.

III.

Joseph Markland, died December 25th, 1781, age 9.

IV.

Peter Walker, interred Sept. 4th, 1766 ; Rachel, his wife, interred April 23rd, 1774 ; Also Thomas, the son of John and Ann Aspinwall, in the 2nd year of his age.

IN THE SOUTH AISLE.

I.

Susan, wife of Robert Barnes, of Bolton, died Nov. 24, 1782, age 41 ; likewise Jane Wolfenden, her niece, died October 1, 1790 ; William Booth, died December 31, 1792, age 17 ; also Robert Barnes, died May 17, 1792, age 57.

II.

Mary Pendlebury, daughter of William and Mary Pendlebury, age 14, died May 4, 1773.

III.

Thomas Ormrod, of Lostock, son of Oliver and Ann Ormrod, of Harwood, died March 24, 1785, age 41 ; also Joseph, son of Thomas and Mary Ormrod, died January 3rd, 1783, age 1 year ; also Thomas, their son, died February 3rd, 1786, age 15.

IV.

Ann, wife of Richard Ridings, died October 31, 1774, aged 57.

V.

Ellen Rigby, 1783.

Ellen Broughton, 1786.

The Ormrods mentioned above are ancestors of Mr. Joseph Ormrod, J.P., of Heaton, and also of Mr. Peter Ormrod, brickmaker, Turton. The family of Ormrods have occupied the Hill Farm in Harwood for 300 years back ; an estate now owned by James Ormrod, Esq., J.P., Halliwell Lodge.

